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**MY LIFE  
AS GERMAN AND JEW**

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# **MY LIFE AS GERMAN AND JEW**

**BY  
JACOB  
WASSERMANN**

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DEDICATED TO  
FERRUCCIO BUSONI  
THE FRIEND AND THE ARTIST

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DISREGARDING my mental habit of moving among images and figures, impelled by an inner need and by the urgency of the times, I would render an account of the most perplexing side of my life, that which concerns my Jewishness and my existence as a Jew. Not as a Jew in the simple sense but as a German Jew—a double concept which even to the disinterested lays bare copious misunderstandings, tragedies, conflicts, quarrels and sufferings.

A delicate subject always, whether it was treated diffidently or freely or defiantly, one side seeking to extenuate, the other openly malicious. Today it is an incendiary focus.

I am very anxious to present my point of view. Nor shall I take for granted anything that I previously regarded as demonstrated. Thus I shall depend on no proof, no vindication or in-



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dictment, nor any sort of constructive eloquence. I shall cite experience only.

An imperative urge has driven me to seek a clear understanding of the nature of that discord which runs through all my activity and being, and of which the years have made me ever more painfully aware and conscious. While still immature, man is much less susceptible to certain perplexities than in his maturity. Then, to the extent that he is devoted to a cause or an idea—fundamentally the same thing—he gradually escapes from that delirious state in which his ego possesses the magic of absoluteness and in which the world and humanity, by virtue of a pleasant and half-voluntary delusion, appear subservient to his dormant will in its condition of emotion-born change. To the extent that one's own person ceases to be a miracle and to constitute a purpose, until at last it becomes a scarcely perceived intermediate element—the shadow, so to speak, of a body unknown and unknowable—to that extent does the difficulty and perilousness

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of life with and among men increase, as does the mystery of all that we call reality and experience.

Ultimately, even in the most gifted and receptive minds, few distinctive signs remain to mark the road covered. How many unforgettable and ineradicable traces persist in the soul depends on the breadth of one's destiny.

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I WAS born and raised in Fuerth, a predominantly Protestant manufacturing city of Middle Franconia, with a large Jewish community consisting principally of artisans and tradesmen. The Jews formed about a twelfth of the total population.

Tradition has it that this is one of the oldest Jewish communities of Germany. Jewish settlements are said to have existed there as far back as the ninth century. Probably, however, they began to increase and flourish only at the end of the fifteenth, when the Jews were expelled from the neighboring city of Nuremberg. Later another stream of refugees—Jews driven out of Spain—came across the Rhine into Franconia. Among these, I believe, were my maternal ancestors, who for centuries lived in villages in the

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valley of the Main, near Würzburg ; my ancestors on my father's side lived in Fuerth, Roth am Sand, Schwabach, Bamberg and Zirndorf.

Thirty or forty decades of living in this country must have given those Jews a close inner relationship to its soil, climate and people—a relationship which must have been bred in their very bone, even though they resisted this influence and formed a distinctly alien element in the national organism. Until the middle of the nineteenth century oppressive restrictions were in force ; the registry law, inability to live wherever they pleased without paying special taxes, the prohibition of free choice as to trade or profession. My mother's father, a cultured man of noble gifts, was destroyed by these restrictions. And, of course, they provided constant nourishment for sinister religious fanaticism, for ghetto obstinacy and ghetto fear.

When I was born, two years after the Franco-Prussian War, the day of civil rights had already dawned for the German Jews. The liberal party

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in the parliament was even fighting for the admission of Jews to government positions, a presumptuous demand which aroused the indignation of even the most enlightened Germans. Thus Theodor Fontane wrote to a friend : "I like the Jews, but I refuse to be governed by them."

No yoke of serfdom, therefore, weighed upon my youth. One side had adapted itself, the other had become accustomed to the foreign element. Economic progress was favorable to tolerance. I remember my father's words, uttered in a tone of happy satisfaction on some occasion : "We live in an age of tolerance !" I often thought about that word *tolerance*. It filled me with awe ; and although I did not grasp its meaning I was suspicious of it.

As far as clothing, language and mode of life were concerned, adaptation was complete. I attended a public government school. We lived among Christians, associated with Christians. The progressive Jews, of whom my father was one, felt that the Jewish community existed only

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in the sense of religious worship and tradition. Religious worship, fleeing the seductive power of modern life, became concentrated more and more in secret, unworldly groups of zealots. Tradition became a legend, and finally degenerated into mere phrases, an empty shell.

My father was a small merchant who could not, however he tried, succeed in gaining wealth as most of his coreligionists were doing. He was unfortunate in business. Something of a dreamer, he always had an *idée fixe* that robbed him of the flexibility of the money-makers. He dreamed of great speculations and large enterprises ; but whatever he attempted was a failure. His spirit was sentimentally liberal, an indifferent descendant of the March revolution, whose milk-and-water tendencies had been carried over into the new empire. I remember hearing, as a child, an excited dispute between him and one of his cousins about Ferdinand Lassalle, of whom he spoke as of the very devil. But I also remember that sometimes he would play moving songs on

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the guitar in the evenings. That was in the good days, before worry had broken his spirit. He loved Schiller, and greatly esteemed Gutzkow. On one of his trips, in a Thuringian bathing resort, he had dined at the same table as Gutzkow ; this incident he often related with great pride. In later years, angry at my literary struggles, he once told me, in order to discourage the overweening ambition to which he felt I had fallen prey : "What are you thinking of ? You'll never become a Gutzkow !"

In the eighties he founded a small factory, with a tiny capital the borrowing of which had been very difficult, but with great hopes. A few years later he went bankrupt, and then became an insurance agent. But despite his indefatigable efforts he barely succeeded in keeping himself and his family afloat ; and he always felt that his life was a failure. All his life he worked hard. When I, at the age of thirty, was able to invite him, then fifty-six years old, to be my guest for a few weeks, he seemed in a state of constant and

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silent amazement. And when he left he told me : "It was the first vacation I ever had !" Eight days after his return home he died.

My mother died when I was nine years old. She was beautiful, blonde, very gentle, very silent. I was often told that strangers in the city, their curiosity aroused by reports of her beauty, would ask to see her. I was also told that her first love had been a Christian, a master mechanic of Ulm. I still have some letters of hers, full of a child-like, simple melancholy, the poetry of sadness. I remember well the general dismay at her unexpected death, and how half the city followed her coffin to the cemetery.

Although my parents differed greatly in nature and character they had one trait in common : they were not suited to their time. Both were children of romanticism. My father was its late spiritual descendant ; my mother's soul was subdued and saddened by it. It revealed itself in my mother's nature and gave her a tragic attitude toward life ; and it affected all my father's ac-



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tions, and was accompanied by an unfounded optimism that veiled the actual state of affairs in disastrous fashion, brought him disappointment after disappointment and destroyed his courage and strength.

THE hostility I encountered in my childhood and early youth because of my Jewishness did not affect me deeply, as I remember. For I felt that it was directed against the community rather than against me personally. A sneering appellation on the street, a venomous glance, a scornfully appraising look, a certain recurrent contempt—all this was the usual thing. But I noticed that outside the community—that is, whenever my affiliations were unknown—I encountered almost none of these stings and malicious thrusts. As the years passed this became more and more evident. My features were not Jewish, nor my manner or speech. My nose was straight, my demeanor quiet and modest. This argument sounds primitive; but people who have not had this experience cannot imagine how primitive

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non-Jews are in their estimation of what is Jewish or in their idea of Jewish characteristics. Their instinct is silent when it is not confronted by a caricature. I have always found that the race prejudice into which they talk themselves, or of which they let themselves be convinced, is fed by the most external things, and that as a result they are quite falsely informed as to where the real danger lies. In this those who nursed the greatest hate were also the most stupid.

Of these things I had only an intimation at the time. As for the community, I felt no inner relationship whatsoever with it. Religion was a study, and not a pleasant one. A lesson taught soullessly by a soulless old man. Even today I sometimes see his evil, conceited old face in my dreams. Curiously enough I have seldom heard of a kindly or lovable Jewish religious teacher ; most of them are bleak zealots and half-ridiculous figures. Mine, like the rest, thrashed formulas into us, antiquated Hebrew prayers that we translated mechanically, without any actual

knowledge of the language ; what he taught was paltry, dead, mummified. Only from the reading of the Old Testament did we derive positive gain, but there, too, both the subject and its interpretation lacked true illumination. Events and characters were effective singly, unconnectedly, but the whole seemed rigid, frequently absurd, even inhuman, and was not ennobled by any loftier outlook. At times a ray broke through from the New Testament, like a gleam of light through a locked door, and curiosity blended with a vague dread. Those eternal images and legends enriched my imagination only after my relation to them had become private, psychological, so to speak. That process gave them individuality, rendering them spiritual in the intellectual, or material in the romantic sense, as the case might be ; in any event, withdrawing them from their connection with religion.

Religious services were even worse. A purely business-like affair, an unsanctified assembly, the

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noisy performance of ceremonies become habitual, devoid of symbolism, mere drill. The progressive section of the community had built a modern synagogue, one of those quasi-Byzantine edifices to be found in most German cities, but whose upstart magnificence cannot disguise the fact that the faith has no power over the hearts of men. To me it all was but empty noise, death to religious devotion, abuse of great words, lamentation obviously groundless because it contradicted patent well-being and hearty worldliness ; all was presumption, clericalism, zealotry. The only relief came in the German sermons of a very stately blond rabbi whom I admired.

The conservative and orthodox Jews conducted their services in the so-called *shuls*, tiny places of worship, often only little rooms in obscure, out-of-the-way alleys. There one could still see heads and figures such as Rembrandt drew, fanatic faces, ascetic eyes burning with the memory of unforgotten persecutions. On their

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lips the austere prayers, appeal and malediction, grew real. Their bowed shoulders bespoke generations of humility and privation, they observed the venerable customs with the utmost faithfulness, with resolute devotion, and they retained their belief, though it was dulled, in the coming of the Messiah. Their souls too were incapable of flight, they too lacked sympathy and cordiality and radiance and humanity and joy, but conviction and passion were theirs invariably.

To such a *shul* I, a boy of nine, had to go for a year after my mother's death—every morning at dawn, every evening at sundown, and on Sabbath and holy days every afternoon also—to recite before the congregation the *Kaddish* prayer for her whose first-born I was. For this purpose ten men over thirteen years of age had to be assembled; as a rule they were old men, ancients, relics of a bygone day. On frosty, snowy winter mornings, on summer mornings when the sun rose at five or even earlier, it was hard to fulfill a duty that had been forced upon me, whose sig-

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nificance I neither understood nor wanted to understand. No one took the trouble to show me the beauty of this custom, and thus to obviate the danger that its apparent cruelty might cause the image of my mother to become clouded, even if only temporarily. Moreover, there was no religious atmosphere or education in my father's house, especially after his second marriage. Certain superficial observances were carried out, but not so much because of an inner urge or to express solidarity as because of public opinion and our relatives ; out of fear and habit. Feast and fast days still were holy, the Sabbath retained something of its ancient quality, the culinary regulations still were kept. But as the struggle for bread grew keener, as the spirit of the new age penetrated more and more, these commandments too were neglected and the domestic arrangements approached those of our non-Jewish neighbors. Not that the chains were cast off entirely ; that would have been too daring. We still acknowledged membership in the religious

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community, though hardly any traces remained of either community or religion. Precisely speaking, we were Jews only in name and in the hostility, remoteness or aloofness of the Christians about us, who, for their part, based their attitude only on a word, a phrase, a deceptive state of affairs. Why, then, were we still Jews, and what did it mean? This question became ever more urgent for me; and no one could answer it.

A cloud stood between me and all matters spiritual and commonplace. At every step forward I collided with barriers and concealing screens; the road was clear in no direction. When I said that no yoke or serfdom weighed upon me it was, of course, only the legal framework of life to which I referred, the individual feeling of security within which is set all that each man does or neglects to do. Once these two factors are stated and granted incomparably greater importance attaches to the question of the individual's attitude toward society and society's



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attitude toward the individual. His awareness of his life's work derives from this, and, varying with the decision, the strength for its accomplishment. It was at this point that my sufferings began.

THE Jewish God was a mere shadow for me, both as the Old-Testament figure implacable in wrath and inexorable in chastisement and as the opportunistically subtilized concept of the modern synagogue. In the minds of the strictly orthodox the divine image was terrifying, but as outlined by the half-renegades, the uncertain professors of the faith, it was meaningless.

When I sought to grasp the God-concept through my childishly philosophic speculations, in solitary thinking and later in talks with a friend, there arose a pantheistic being without distinctive countenance or character or depth, the product of current phrases, evoked only by the desire for a sustaining idea. As this idea proved more and more unsatisfactory—whether because of its mediocrity or because I had an

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inkling of its triteness—I fell into an equally cheap and fluid atheism that was in even greater consonance with the times, that age of hopeless shallowness and debilitation, which gave idolatrous worship to science, understood and misunderstood, and by means of education debased its entire intellectual plane.

No hand reached forth to guide me, no leader or teacher. I became lost in many respects ; I sought support in situations in which the true man can dispense with it. I had to adjust myself to an order that had lost both its soul and its power of sensuous perception. Such a state of affairs demands expediency to the point of cold cerebral intoxication, or else the imagination grows inflatedly active and the soul loses its focal point. Had not my questioning received lasting discouragement in my early youth, I should have been able to find connecting roads and bridges. Conventions would have become important, formal rules would have commanded respect, impos-

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ing no burden. But my mother had disappeared too early from our circle, daily cares and the anxious struggle for life robbed my father of the broader outlook. He could hardly tolerate the gaze of his children ; for he was deeply ashamed of the fact that constant toil had brought him no success, and thought himself the only one so unrewarded. He always looked as if tormented by a bad conscience. We were actually forbidden to ask questions, and disobedience sometimes received severe punishment. So that in my soul weeds grew freely.

I remember that I suffered from morbid fears : fear of ghosts, of people, of things, of dreams. In everything about me lay a sinister sorcery, always baneful, always boding disaster and always confirmed. I was often invited to an old house where lived an old couple. The husband was a scholar ; in his room stood a bookcase behind whose glass door were numerous editions of the works of Spinoza ; and these had a curious

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fascination for me. When, one day, I asked the mistress of the house to give me a volume she told me, in a tone of sibylline gloom, that whoever read these books must become insane. For years the name of Spinoza was associated in my mind with the sound and sense of her words. More or less the same thing happened with everything gay and playful and festive that tried to reach me or that I tried to reach. All these things were thrust aside, suspected, made joyless. Pleasure was forbidden.

After the death of my mother we had a loyal maid who was fond of me. In the evenings she used to sit before the fireplace and tell us stories. I recall that one night, when I had listened with particular raptness, she took me in her arms and said: "You could be a good Christian, you have a Christian heart." I also recall that these words frightened me. First, because they contained a tacit condemnation of being Jewish, and thus provided further material for the brooding

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to which I already was addicted ; and secondly, because at that time the idea of a Christian still alarmed me, and, partly for atavistic reasons, partly because of my dread of life, represented a focus of hostile elements.

The same feeling seized me when I passed a church or a crucifix, a churchyard or a Christian priest. Unconfessed attraction strove against unconscious experience that lay in the blood. To this were added the overheard utterances of adults, tales of complaint and criticism and outlawing, the expression of recurrent typical experience, danger-signals in speech and in everyday events. From the other quarter, again, a searching glance sufficed, a shrug of the shoulders, a disdainful smile, an expectant gesture or attitude—sufficed to impose caution and to recall the unbridgeable gulf.

But just what constituted the unbridgeable gulf I could not discover. And later, when I grasped its essential nature, my first reaction was

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to reject it for my own person. In childhood my brothers and sisters and I were so closely bound up with the daily life of our Christian neighbors of the working and middle classes that we had our playmates there, our protectors, our refuge in hours of desolation. We went in and out of the houses of the gold-beaters, the carpenters, the cobblers, the bakers ; on Christmas eve we were invited, and received presents also. But watchfulness and a feeling of strangeness persisted. I was only a guest, and they were celebrating festivals in which I had no share.

My nature, however, was such that I yearned to be not merely a guest, to be regarded not as a stranger. Not as an invited guest, nor as one tolerated out of pity and kindness, nor, worst of all, as one admitted because his hosts have consented to ignore his race and descent. The longing to become merged with a certain fullness in the humanity about me was innate in me.

Not only was this longing not appeased, but with the years the gap between my impetuous

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demand and its realization yawned ever deeper. I would have become lost, would ultimately have had to give up all hope, had not two saving phenomena entered into my life : the landscape and the word.



STIFLING in its narrow dreariness our ungar-  
dened city, city of soot, of a thousand chimneys,  
of clanging machinery and hammers, of beer-  
shops, of sullen, sordid greed in business or  
craft, of petty and mean people crowded together,  
with poverty and lovelessness, permeating my  
father's house.

In the environs a barren, sandy plain, dirty  
factory streams, the slow, murky river, the uni-  
formly straight canal, gaunt woods, melancholy  
villages, hideous quarries, dust, clay, broom.

An hour by road to the east: Nuremberg,  
monument to great historic events. Ancient  
houses, courtyards, streets, cathedrals, bridges,  
fountains and walls. But for me never mere  
stage setting or showy display, no empty, roman-  
tic scene, but intertwined with my life in a com-

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plex of associations. In my childhood this was so, and later to an even greater extent.

A few hours by train to the south : hilly Franconia, valley of the Altmühl, where—at Gunzenhausen, near Ansbach—I was permitted to spend my vacations with my mother's sister, all the summer of the year and often some fall and winter weeks. A landscape delicately delineated, with forests that did not traduce the cherished inner image as did those others. Flower gardens, orchards, fish-ponds, deserted castles, ruins full of legends, village fairs, simple people. A free mutual relationship with beasts and plants resulted. I became deeply intimate with water, grass and trees, and with peasants, traders, innkeepers, tramps, hunters, foresters, bailiffs, guards, soldiers. Here I saw them in an uncomplicated relationship to their world, which was mine too, or at least did not cast me out. I could venture to approach them, for organic accord and gradation make for guilelessness. In a way I lived in two distinct continents, and had

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the ability to forget, while in the brighter, what the darker had taught me. There I was welded to the group, always reminded of it, shoved into my caste, aware of division, familiar with insults, involved in the ugly, the old, the ancient, the ancestral; convulsively shy, isolated, avoiding others and often avoided. Here I lay in the arms of nature, lovingly close to her, released by her influence, though only temporarily, from the unshakable burden of indebtedness and indictment which else would inevitably have paralyzed, even crushed me.

Beyond these two domains of experience lay the third, the inner landscape, inherent in the soul and born with it into this world; it determines the nature and color of dreams, of dreams in the broadest sense, and all the other secret and unknown paths of the mind which constitute its atmosphere and its abode. More than imagined pictures of sea and mountains, of caves and parks and jungles, more than the paradisiacal ideal of immature yearning, more than

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an escape and refuge from disappointment in the present, this inner landscape is the crystal center of true life itself, the spot where its laws are dictated and the source of its actual destiny, of which our so-called reality may be a mere reflection.

To cite experience in this realm without falsification or invention is almost impossible. Gradations of emotional intensity, images of intangible fleetingness are involved here. Almost everything that can be said must be prefaced with "I believe." One gropes here, then thinks back ; after all, memory is but reconstruction. To me it seems certain that all inner landscape includes atavistic components ; I am equally certain that in most people, at a definite period between puberty and entry into so-called practical life, it withers, dries out and finally dies and disappears.

I was very naïve in my dependence on dreams and visions. I may well call them visions, for conditions I had never experienced, things and

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figures impossible to see were palpably revealed to me. Between the ages of ten and twenty years I lived in a state of constant delirium ; often I was so far away that only a shell devoid of all feeling remained for those who stood or walked beside me. Later I was told that people had to shout at me to arouse me, awake though I was. I had attacks of ecstasy, of wild, silent forlornness ; and as a rule the break was so sudden and powerful that the connections snapped and I was left as if sundered ; nor did I know what had happened to me. In both spheres my powers of attention grew sharpened—indeed, attention is one of my fundamental traits—but there were no bridges. Here I could be entirely sober, there utterly beside myself, or vice versa ; intercourse or communication between the two was completely lacking. This kept me in an extraordinary state of tension that tormented and excited me and which the people around me mostly found incomprehensible. Amazement and despair were my predominant emotions ;

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amazement at what I had seen and perceived and felt, despair because it was incommunicable. What I really felt, I presume, was this : I knew that remarkable, unheard-of things were happening to me, with me, in me, but I was totally incapable of explaining them to myself or others. In a sense I was a Moses descending Mount Sinai, but without any recollection of what he had seen there and of what God had told him. Even to-day I have not the slightest idea of the true nature of that mystery, that hidden flame, that enigmatic other world. Though I feel tempted to explore some elements of it I must recognize that it is forever unfathomable. Yet it should be possible to determine what derives from one's ancestry and what from the earth, what lay in the blood and what entered through the eye, and from what depths the individual grows up into his predestined circle.

The presentation of this struggling and exaltation has already indicated a relationship to words and their emergence out of need and necessity.

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How important a resource and aid words can be also is evident in my case, for the things and the life to which they referred had dropped out of my consciousness and lay behind a door impossible to unlock. I believe that all creation of images and forms may be traced back to such a process. I believe that at bottom all production is an attempt at reproduction, at an approach to things seen, heard and felt that have passed through to the other side of our consciousness and now must be dug out piecemeal, in shattered fragments. I, at least, have never regarded my work or the so-called process of creation as aught but the uninterrupted, painful efforts of an obsessed treasure-hunter.

But for me, even at the earliest age, to make these things known was all-important. Though the vanished visions cast me—dumb, dazzled, struck with obliviousness—into base reality, I yet wanted to make them known; for despite their intangibility they filled me to the brim. Even as a boy of seven or eight I would occa-

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sionally, overcoming my habitual shyness and silence, begin to tell disconnected tales which my family, neighbors and schoolmates would regard as half-dangerous, half-ludicrous fabrications and for which I would receive reprimands, ridicule and punishment. On winter evenings we children often helped our mother pick over lentils, and as we worked I sometimes would suddenly begin the most fanciful sort of chatter. Horrors, iniquities and adventures my romancing would bring into the heap of lentils, ghostly terrors and miracles ; I would cite innocent neighbors as witnesses of weird events, and for myself would prophesy the greatest glory, the loftiest fame. My mother, dropping her work, would look at me with anxious astonishment—a look that drove me even more stubbornly into meaningless and tangled obscurities. Not rarely she would take me aside and tearfully adjure me not to fall prey to wickedness.

But I must insist that it was my own impulse, coupled with necessity, that made me a teller of



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stories with characters that moved and clear-cut plots ; for this, transcending by far the scope of my childhood world, showed me my roots and the road I had to take.

My father's second wife had no liking for us children of his first marriage and let us feel her dislike in every way. In addition to unjust and excessively severe punishments and constant complaints to our father, she gave us as little food as possible, marked the loaf so that she would be able to see when one of us had wrongfully cut off a slice of bread, and took care to have the crime punished mercilessly. True, it was hard for her to keep house with the money she received, just as it was hard for my father to get it. Yet I believe that in this respect beggars' children were better off. When my uncle, my mother's brother, a well-to-do manufacturer living in Vienna, heard how badly off we were he deposited a certain sum with an acquaintance in our city to cover urgent expenditures ; and I, as the oldest, was given a mark a week for the

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purpose of buying food for my brothers and sisters and myself. In my eyes the sum was very considerable, and as I felt it would be too dangerous to carry it on my person I worked hard to find a proper hiding-place. My six-year-old brother, who was five years younger than I, set his mind on finding out this hiding-place ; for he mistrusted me, seized every opportunity to ask for more than I apportioned to him and insisted that I show him just what I had. Once the quarrel was in full swing it usually reached the point of threats, so that I had to expect the greedy rebel to denounce me to our stepmother at any time—a piece of treachery the results of which I feared above all. For my brother was justified to this extent : I had not spent all the money given me on bread, fruit, sausage and cheese, but had also bought some cheap books that I consumed in haste and secrecy.

My brother and I occupied the same bed in a sort of closet. And in my extremity I found this way out : to tell him stories before we went to

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sleep. Unexpectedly I found him a most attentive listener, and I seized my opportunity by interrupting the story at the most thrilling point every night. If, then, he proved unruly during the following day I had an effective weapon and threat at my disposal : I simply declared that I would not continue the story. The more complicated, gripping and exciting the episodes I invented, the more eager he naturally was to hear the following instalment ; and naturally too, in order to keep him in check and make him respect my wishes, I had to use all my wits and inventive talent. It was not at all easy. He was inexorable in his demands ; I could not become boring or careless. So I would spend weeks, even months, in the telling of a single story, whispering in the dark till we both grew tired and until the complicated gyrations of the characters had brought about a situation the solution of which was still a mystery to me, but which left my breathless auditor in my power for another twenty-four hours.

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I have said that this showed me my roots and the road I had to take. The road, because I learned the important fact that man may be spell-bound, "enthralled," to use the trite metaphor, by one who seizes hold of his imagination ; that he can even be diverted from evil by one who fixes his mind on events and entanglements which, though unreal, simulate reality ; that joy, fear, surprise, emotion, smiles, laughter may be aroused in him, and this the more effectively as the play is more free, the illusion less impeded by intent and purpose. The constant evidence of effectiveness kept me breathless too, spurred my ambition, forced me on to ever new imaginings and to the perfection of my means.

My roots—for surely this was an Oriental instinct in my blood. It was Scheherazade's method transposed into everyday life ; a latent seed made to grow by chance and peril. Scheherazade tells stories to save her life, and as she spins her tales she becomes the very genius of story-telling. As for me—well, my life was not

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at stake, but the fever of romancing gripped my whole being also and determined my thinking and my existence.

Ere long I felt the need for writing down one or another of those nocturnal narratives. This had to be done with the utmost secrecy; my struggle began then and there. Unavoidably my doings gradually became known. To my stepmother they were evidence of unmitigated slothfulness, and she threw into the fire every written page that came into her hands. Relatives, teachers and comrades viewed my activity with hostile eyes, almost as if my enterprise constituted an offense against them; and my first announcement of my intention to devote myself to a literary career aroused the laughter of our friends and the violent wrath of my father.

For I had been promised, so to speak, to my uncle, that brother of my mother's, whose own marriage was childless. My father had set all his hopes on this. Where he had failed I should

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succeed : in growing rich. His favorite dream visualized me as a great business man, the successor of the brother-in-law he admired. Hence he tried everything to suppress my aberrant inclinations.

At that time knowledge of literature and the literary atmosphere were neither as common nor as highly desired as today in middle-class society ; and this had its good points. Now that art no longer is the rare and precious delight of the chosen few it has become a platitude, an extravagance and a subterfuge for the many, and, finally, a trade like any other. Now none are willing to listen and receive ; each wants to have his own say, to play the giver himself.

In my fifteenth year I wrote a novel, an unspeakably jejune and insipid affair ; and one day I took the manuscript to the editorial office of the daily paper. A stout editor sat sleepily at his desk and surveyed me with amazement as I stated my plea. Shortly thereafter the beginning of

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this composition appeared under my name, sprinkled with misprints, in the fiction supplement of the paper. I still remember the winter evening when, after supper, my father picked up the paper, which I had laid beside his plate folded in such a way that his gaze had to fall on my work ; with beating heart I waited. I can still see the sudden change in his careworn, tired face, the quick flash of pride in his eyes soon replaced by anger and helpless fear.

Unpleasant scenes followed. Reproaches, threats, abuses, scorn. In school too I was called to account, summoned before the director and sentenced to twelve hours' detention to atone for the forbidden experience of being published. My father now became a ruthless oppressor, with his wife as his loyal spy, so that I could no longer find a quiet hour for work. On moonlit nights I would sometimes leave my bed and, in a fevered state of soul, write page after page at the window. On one such night fire broke out in my father's factory, which lay across the court. I was the

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first to see the flame, and gave the alarm ; and when I saw my father—horrified, half-dressed—rushing down the stairs I imagined that the calamity constituted his punishment for his harshness to me.



DARK and difficult were those years of development. To avoid being crushed by my grievance and my feeling of unjust treatment I eagerly sought refuge in the fancy that the universal spirit was secretly working for me. It was rather miraculous that the prison-house of reality did not destroy me.

To the demands with which people tried to ravish my individuality I could oppose only obstinacy—mute obstinacy, mute non-conformity. Two friends helped me, each in his own way. Both were Jews, both played a typical rôle in my evolution.

One was tall, slender, with blond curls and the head of an Antinoüs. The son of a wealthy widow, he possessed an imposing library. I had to steal the hours we spent together reading the

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works of the poets, hours of keen ecstasy. Insatiably hungry, I absorbed verse and prose, images and scenes. All that dwelt in this realm was awesomely sacred to me. Only a narrow bridge, to be crossed in secrecy, led from the commonplace to this region of emotional abandon. There all was bleakness, fear, oppression, desolation, torpor ; here lay fire and warmth and passion, and words, images and dreams served as the altars of a hidden worship. Possibly my friend, inspired by me, shared my transports ; he was a gentle soul, given to sentimentality, vain of his good looks ; for a time I idolized him. While I was destined for a commercial career his aim was to become an actor ; and since I saw in him the future Garrick of the German stage our chosen field was that of tragedy. In my breast rose the ambition to become a Shakespeare for my admired Garrick, and I set about writing tragedies myself. I had no bearings, knew no school. Storm and stress seethed in me, pathos and extravagance gushed out of the wellspring

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of my own mind, an invented world full of murder, bloodthirstiness and madness; and my friend believed in me. In his eyes I had already achieved immortality. When fate separated us and I had to go into my uncle's factory in Vienna we kept the flame alive with an ardent correspondence; in numerous and lengthy epistles I reported in detail on all I was writing and thinking. However, he soon cooled. I observed that my intransigence troubled him, for he had come to terms. Instead of at least echoing my spiritual pain he spent himself in affecting if fictitious descriptions of his amorous adventures. And one day, when he had again written at great length about his passion for some actress, I decided not to reply; nor did I ever hear from him again.

My other friend was the son of a Gunzenhausen merchant. Three years older than I, he studied law in Munich, but during our vacations was my constant companion. Markedly unlike my first friend he was, retarded in his growth,

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dwarflike, indeed, but endowed with such keen Jewish penetration, so great a gift for seeing and flaying the foibles and infirmities of people that I feared him. My literary inclinations received his most caustic jeers, especially in the presence of young girls, before whom he loved to shine and who were greatly impressed by his Heinesque witticisms, his knowledge of books and his quick repartee.

In this little world he was the shining light, the final critical authority ; I, on the other hand, a poetaster and visionary ungrounded in reality, and one who did not even take the road of humanistic culture, cut a pitiful figure. I could find no means to assert myself before him, no effort or promise or token could convince him. My words and my work he plucked to pieces, even cast doubt on my strivings. Yet I struggled most painfully to please him and gain his approval. Not only did he sow disbelief in those about me, but he filled my own mind with misgivings. Intimidated by his eloquence and

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argumentative skill, by the apparently inexorable severity of his judgment, by his superior knowledge and malicious tongue, I accepted him as my guide and arbiter. When at last he deigned to recognize my struggles and aspirations I gave him the power of deciding my fate in a momentous hour. It happened thus :

My situation in my uncle's house had grown untenable. I did not come up to expectations. In the work assigned to me I was listless and unreliable ; at every opportunity I slipped out of that rigid circle to indulge secretly in tastes that were considered queer, harmful and even criminal. I spent my days in a confused, somnambulist state of mind ; my nights, often until dawn, I gave to my manuscripts, working feverishly, frenziedly, as if beside myself. That the results of this labor were worthless goes without saying ; but at such stages of one's development it is intensity, rather than quality, that counts. The consequences were domestic disputes, reproaches of ingratitude, attempts to reform, pun-

ishments, lectures, derision. It never occurred to any one that my erratic activities might contain some element of rationality, that they might lead to a future or even—inconceivable thought—to a means of earning my livelihood. My uncle, who was kindly and simple if weak, a slave to his work and its proceeds, was subject to influences that distorted his view of me. He threatened to turn me out in disgrace; and I could not but feel that the worst thing of all would be my having to return to my father, an unwanted burden, or, as later did happen, to have to earn my living as an office clerk in provincial isolation.

There was a physician who had attended the family for years, and who was their friend also, who bore a curious intellectual resemblance to my friend. Keen in mind and eye, skeptically intelligent, familiar with literature, a Jew too, he was the other's counterpart in an older generation, but more gentlemanly and good-natured. Today that type has nothing left of either court-

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liness or good nature. Superficially considered it might seem as if the type had gained in sureness of intellect what it has lost in kindness and polish. But that is only seeming. If we pull aside the cloak a denier stands revealed now as then, one who has lost his God, an opportunist made by a quietly gnawing desperation of whose nature he knows nothing. Curious, how I became attached to the older man, as unreservedly as to the younger ; and both disappointed me in the same way. In the course of my life that specifically Jewish form of worldly wisdom has many times been disastrous for me. For my entirely different mental outlook has been incapable of even perceiving practical utilitarian purposes and ulterior motives ; yet upon me the burden of outward responsibility has often lain, and the inner always.

The physician rejected and ridiculed the proofs I had shown him of my talent, and in company made them the butt of his witty banter. However, he condescended to discuss matters

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with me, and advised me to study. Now arose the question whether my uncle would grant me the necessary means ; the physician promised to persuade him to do so. In the meanwhile I, entranced at the new prospect, turned to my friend in Munich and described the situation to him ; anticipating things, I wrote that I might be able to depend on the support of my relative, and asked whether he would take me in and help me prepare for my examinations. His reply was cordial and encouraging far beyond my expectations. He, usually so cool in deliberation, drew so tempting a picture of common endeavor and work that I suddenly grew too impatient to continue negotiations with my uncle and his advisers. One afternoon in May, 1890, accordingly, I secretly packed my trunk, went to the railway station and, in my pocket the fifty or sixty gulden I had saved, fled to Munich.

That nocturnal ride in the train I still remember very clearly, for during the whole of it I was in—and suited my actions to—a mood that in



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all my life has come on me but rarely. I sat in a dimly lit third-class carriage, together with about thirty other people, peasants, townsmen, laborers, some women and girls too. And from the very beginning of the trip, all through the night, I kept them in a state of constant noisy laughter, in which the conductors also joined, with boisterous jokes, hilarious stories and giddy buffoonery. All their moist, laughing eyes were fixed on me expectantly, gratefully, delightedly ; I still remember a thin old peasant who literally wept with laughter, and a woman who from time to time gave me an apple from her hamper and fondled my hand. It gave me pleasure to watch how sadness, bitterness and hurt grew stronger within me as the joyful transports of my simple audience increased. Only the impulse of youthfully self-complacent, self-intoxicated desire for the company of others and flight from others can enable one to act with such impudent, deep-going self-contradiction. No doubt, however, a

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sense of extraordinary loneliness also was involved here.

My student friend had hoped that my uncle, whom he respected, had sent me forth with his blessing and ample financial means ; naturally he was not pleased when it developed that I had run away and now would have to plead for generosity. Half forced to it, he again became the advocate of my rash undertaking, with the result that I was granted a very small monthly allowance—so small, indeed, that it barely preserved me from hunger, and regular work and carefree study were unthinkable. This caused my mentor's mood to grow more and more sullen. I became a burden to him ; he did not know what to do with me, and tried to shake the responsibility. He upbraided me for my recklessness, stupidity and lack of will power, and prophesied that I would come to no good end. Among his comrades, into whose group he sometimes brought me, I was considered a tragi-comic

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figure, a clown, a poor devil ; according to the standards of student life I was their inferior, and an object of additional contempt because I could not drink. Soon I saw that my position had grown far worse than it had been before my flight from my uncle's house.

Before going away for his vacation my friend, pretending prudent solicitude, committed the treachery of writing my uncle that I was not taking my new tasks seriously, and that consequently he could no longer foster my activities ; it was his conviction that an academic career was closed to me. This brought to an end the financial support I had been receiving. The state of forlorn helplessness into which I now fell was aggravated by doubt in my future when, on one of those days of increasing distress, I made a pilgrimage to one of the most famous poets of Munich. Laden with a voluminous epic in blank verse I went to him for criticism and guidance and a word of encouragement. But the opposite happened. The great man, who maintained a cool and

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majestic attitude toward me, earnestly advised me to resume my commercial career ; probably the quality of my opus amply justified his view. I was not angry at him, for even then I felt instinctively that in the developmental years work and achievement attest far less than do the man himself and the destiny and road he undertakes to follow. But to see these signs requires contemplation of more than a thick manuscript, and a relationship other than that obtaining between a celebrated authority and a bashful apprentice.

As a matter of fact I was not nearly so concerned about work and achievement at the time as I, momentarily impatient, may have imagined. What I craved was the world of men, a pivotal point in life, a fundament whereon to build my work and achievement. Such a fundament I lacked. From the beginning I had lacked it. Queerly enough I had no precisely definable sense of deprivation, nor was I aware of any circumscribed and limited resistance ; in my mind was only surmise and blind groping, hardly capable of formulation in my consciousness and my soul ; only much later did it condense to the point of tangibility. As I think back upon that time it seems like a period of feeling my way through an empty dark room the exit of which I would have to find before any meaningful ac-

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tivity could be considered, before any system could come into my affairs.

No individual claimed me as belonging to him, nor did any group ; not the people of my blood nor those whom I yearned to join, not those of my own sort nor those of my choice. For gradually I had decided to make a choice ; and I had made it. It was my inner destiny rather than a free decision that brought about my secession from the old group. The new, however, neither received nor accepted me ; and to offer myself to them would have been incompatible with pride and honor. Herewith the oppressive weight of my problem began to make itself felt.

What I have said of yearning and choice must not be misunderstood. I was ruled by no dominant impulse ; nor was I forgetful, or mindful of utilitarian considerations. I lived in an atmosphere of flattering idealization that obstinately cloaked the truth about mankind in general, though that truth was so obvious all around

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me. Quite ingenuous, not yet taught or humbled by experience, on the whole not very susceptible to outward experience, my mind created an ideally transfigured picture of the world about me. A naïve self-confidence or self-deception prevented me from applying to myself the established differences of class, caste and race, of descent and civil rank.

I had rid myself of all attachment, and, perniciously deluded, considered my case typical, so that in my eyes humanity consisted only of individuals, all equally detached. This hurled my fancy into the boundless, the bottomless, the endless. Weak and miserable I stood before my detachment, which in one sense lured me, in another became my fate and an incubus on my conscience.

To keep from starving I had to take refuge with my father, who, himself very badly off, lived in Würzburg at this time. I returned truly as a prodigal son ; my homecoming came off without melodramatics, but sorrow and humiliation could not be dispensed with. My father made it clear that I had destroyed his highest hopes ; his attitude toward me grew even colder and more gloomy than it had been. Most bitter of all was my stepmother's reception of the unwelcome boarder, on whom, for that matter, she had never wasted any kindness. It was harrowing to have to beg, so to speak, for the meals I ate and the bed in which I slept ; but, then, everything was hard from then on.

For weeks I wandered about planlessly through the old streets and vineyard paths on the river's



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bank, on the rampart of the palace garden, in the park of Veitshöchheimer Castle. Because I had no companion, no one whose eyes would meet mine in friendly greeting, I made myself an armor of delight and pride in my loneliness. I could feel that minds were in ferment outside. I too could hear the call and appeal of the youth of that period, the rallying-cry of a new age, a new truth, a new mankind. But I did not dare consider myself included, nor did I see any path that could lead me to them. I did not dare—but a queer pride too was involved, that dream of royalty in disguise which outcasts particularly will fondly cherish.

In the meanwhile my father, more and more worried by the lazy life I led, demanded that I write my uncle a letter of apology and, by promising to reform, induce him to take me in again. In vain did I resist; the persecution grew too galling. So I yielded to the inevitable and composed one of those skilfully written letters that my uncle contemptuously called verbal

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pyrotechnics. None the less, however, he consented to put me on probation. His house and his factory were to remain closed to me until my behavior should prove that I had been cured of my "crazy ideas." He procured room and board for me with the family of one of his employes. They were simple people, noisy and commonplace, who regarded me with respect because I was the nephew of the chief ; yet, as an aspiring and unsuccessful author I seemed ridiculous to them, too. I was taken into an export office as an apprentice, and from the very beginning my work was almost unbearable drudgery. The head of the concern was a choleric fool, a speculator and a slave-driver, a libertine notorious throughout the city. The atmosphere of the place was one of curious underhandedness and insubordination. The basest services were demanded of me ; without knowing why I quickly found myself the object of vile intrigue, of slander and spite. For ten months I made every effort to keep my promise. Then a brazen prac-

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tical joke put an end to the matter. In my absence one day the head clerk found some pornographic photographs in my desk. I was summoned before a tribunal. I knew nothing of the matter, had, indeed, never seen such pictures ; but, scorning to defend myself, I left my position and flatly declared to my uncle that I would have nothing more to do with such people. A girl who worked in the office, and who had a liking for me, did not rest until she had uncovered the conspiracy and forced the culprit to confess ; but for me it was too late.

The family council was at a loss. I had become a sore trial, and had to be got rid of by fair means or foul. It was decided that I should now serve my year in the army ; and should I fail to come to my senses in the course of that year I was to be left to my fate. So I was sent back to Würzburg ; there I presented myself at the barracks, and was accepted. To cover my expenses half of a small maternal legacy, amounting to about a thousand marks, was liquidated ;

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on that I would have to live for an entire year after paying the unavoidable army expenses and the cost of my uniform and deputy. Thus I entered the army as an exempt without money—an unfortunate combination, as I soon came to feel. A Jew, and poor besides, I was held in twofold contempt by both officers and men. At the very beginning, moreover, I did something so silly and stupid that the odium of it clung to me throughout the year: During my first few days there I was required to hand in a written *Curriculum vitae*, to which, ludicrously enough, I appended a melancholy poem that, to the best of my memory, had as its theme the vanity of all mortal endeavor and of mine in particular. These rhymed verses the sergeant-major read before the assembled soldiery, who received them with unanimous guffaws; then he harangued me as crushingly as if I had scoffed at the entire German army.

THINGS experienced must be treated freely—else they remain bound up with the fortuitous or the futile. As my intention here is not to write my biography but merely to present a fateful conflict, the element of coherent narrative may be considered ended with the account I have given, the purpose of which is only to show how I developed and in what soil I grew. The road now grows narrower and more definite, the course steadier. The law of logical arrangement must yield to the sequence and gradation of decisive events.

Although I made it a point of honor to do my utmost to fulfill my duties as a soldier, to accomplish everything that was required—which at times necessitated no little self-command—I did not succeed in gaining the approbation of

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my superiors. Before long I knew that even exemplary conduct would not have helped me, could not have helped me, because no one wanted to give me approval. I saw it in the scornful attitude of the officers, in their undisguised disposition to take satisfactory performance of duty as a matter of course while unsatisfactory work became an occasion for public humiliation. Social companionship was out of the question, personal worth was not even considered, intelligence or any original form of expression immediately aroused suspicion, promotion beyond a certain point was inconceivable; all this because my identification papers carried the designation *Jew* in the column marked *Creed*. But these are well-known facts, no longer surprising to any one. I too had had advance knowledge of the situation—a circumstance which in itself is bad enough and must lead to a constant clouding of one's general outlook on life.

In this connection I found the attitude of the troops more amazing and far more distressing.

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For the first time I encountered that dull, rigid, almost mute hatred that has penetrated the national organism. The word *anti-Semitism* does not serve to describe it, for the term reveals neither the nature nor the source, neither the depth nor the aim of that hatred. It contains elements of superstition and voluntary delusion, of fanatic terror and priest-inspired callousness, of ignorance and the rancour of him who is wronged and betrayed, of unscrupulousness and falsehood as well as of an excusable weapon of self-defense, of apish malice as well as of religious bigotry. Greed and curiosity are involved here, blood-thirstiness and the fear of being lured or seduced, love of mystery and scanty self-esteem. In its constituents and background it is a peculiarly German phenomenon. It is a German hatred.

Every honest and self-respecting Jew must feel a lasting dismay at his first breath of this miasma, at his first attempt to understand its nature. That was my experience too. Furthermore, the Catholic population of Lower Franconia—

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plentifully interspersed with an unpleasant scene of trade-loving, usurious Jews who still bore the mark of the ghetto, shopkeepers, second-hand dealers, peddlers, cattle-dealers—was exposed to constant incitation, and stood far below the neighboring peoples in urbanity and natural kindness ; and in the popular mind there still persisted vivid memories of stories of well-known poisonings and ritual murder, of episcopal blood pardons, of sanguinary and profitable persecutions of Jews.

Occasionally I would establish a mutual advantageous relationship with some young man. But when that certain revelation became unavoidable he would either withdraw cautiously, or, after assuming an air of unconcern for a while, eventually show signs of a distrust almost impossible to repress ; or else he would make it clear to me that he recognized my person as an exception and for my benefit set aside his well-founded prejudice. And that was the worst insult of all. To be proclaimed inferior as a



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individual is far more easily borne than disparagement of one's race ; far better suspicion of one's character than of one's birth. One can defend oneself against aspersions on one's own character, by demonstrating the error, or, at the very least, imagining that one is refuting it. Against libel of the race, however, all arguments and proofs remain powerless ; the deepest, most cherished bright surface of consciousness grows dim and tarnished.

When, after my discharge from the army, I came to Nuremberg, where I had been offered a subordinate, poorly paid position in a government office, I was already maimed in an essential phase of my relationship to the world. The combination of innate pride with fear of humiliation is most deleterious to probity and freedom of action. If one has gained an indestructible sense of one's own worth one can be saved from bitterness of heart only by isolation, by the decision to let oneself be sought and found, by yearning for him who will seek and find. It is

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the miracle of youth that it can never entirely despair of man ; it will disdain itself rather than cease believing in its dream-vision of man. And so I too then disdained myself. I fell into bad company. In my unquenchable thirst for intellectual intercourse I hurled myself into the cloaca of intellect. I hungered for corroboration and was pushed out of positions I had painfully gained. I longed for the word that does not derive all its meaning from money, sweat and toil, and was struck by the polluting phrase that apes the nature and bearing of intellectuality. Nothing more need be said to designate the life I led for years. What would it avail to exhume hideous incidents from the tomb of time ? Nights spent in filthy beer-shops, ecstasies of a rebelliousness largely devoid of ideas, pitiful wasting of self, boasting of poverty, duty left undone, throttling want, cheap defiance of the world. It is nothing new today, nor was it new at that time. To speak of that dismal circle also would not be worth while. Sad or re-

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markable though individual lives might be, the chief mark of the group was mediocrity. In every obscure café on earth all the dissatisfied and impotent artists, writers and down-and-out students, all the Falstaffs and Pistols, Collines and Hjalmar Ekdals torture the same phrase to death in the same way, from the first flush of intoxication to the despondency of the morning after.

What my existence during those years contributed to the deeper destination of my life derived, on the one hand, from the city, monument of the Middle Ages, reposing as if enchanted in the midst of frenzied activity and feverish, constantly intensified industry ; almost the source, and the future center, of the struggle between the middle class and the proletariat. To me the fact that the first European railway ran between Nuremberg and Fuerth has always seemed of symbolic significance for this constellation. On the other hand, naturally bound up with this, was the sight and knowledge of an abrupt divi-

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sion in the world of men—a world of the contemplative and silent, men of the past, and a world of the purposeful and overloud, men of the future.

All this in a limited space, like a specimen for experiment, in the heart of Germany. The scales moved up and down before me. I was not inclined to link my fate with either. From the one side I received the delicacy of old forms, reverence for tradition, the breath of history, inwardness, the power to feel and understand the peaceful and self-contained and secure. From the other came the vision of new things, concepts and vistas of a transformed age; for the rest, however, there was bleakness, bleakness of soul, sluggishness of soul, hardening of souls.

If I did not sink together with those others who became submerged I owe it, perhaps, to a man who stepped into my life at a most critical moment. I had aroused his sympathetic interest; he observed me, approached me, pointed out the danger. His gentle, patient, loving

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persuasion taught me to abhor and avoid that sterile, rotten life. What serious exhortation could not accomplish he achieved by means of caustic humor and apt anecdotes ; for he was full of stories and never wearied of telling them. Himself he was involved in many difficulties, moodily reflective as a Hamlet ; and lonely too, for his character, sharply gruff and sensitive as a woman's, made all intimate association hard for him. Yet he attached himself to me, entreating, guiding, jealously watchful. He was one of the most enigmatic people I have ever met, and his influence extended over the most important years of my life.

Six or seven years older than I, he was the son of an ancient though totally impoverished patrician family of Nuremberg. His father was dead, and he lived with his mother, a curiously austere woman who hated and avoided the world, in a state that hovered between wrangling and love. By trade he was a lithographer, but in his tenacious way he had turned to literary matters

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—not as a productive worker but as one passionately dissenting with his time and his contemporaries. Lean and lank, muscular, quick, nervous as a thoroughbred, moody, winning, able to impress others, he was impulsive and violent, astute and witty, with leanings toward asceticism and bookishness, toward homeopathy and eccentricity.

When he, feeling that at home his powers would waste away, had gone to Zurich, where the prospect of a broader scope of endeavor awaited him, I was invaded by a sense of having been deserted by my guardian spirit ; to join him again became my chief aim. A correspondence unusually intense on both his part and mine proved only an unsatisfactory substitute for our living hours together. But for the time being no hope of reunion presented itself. In the meanwhile I had reached my majority and received the tiny remainder of the legacy my mother had left me—five or six hundred marks, whose possession gave me the illusion of wealth. I left my posi-

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tion, paid my debts and left for Munich. There, for a few weeks, I lived a carefree life, a state entirely new to me ; but retribution soon came, for one day my supposed treasure was exhausted. I looked for work again, inserted an advertisement in the paper. An insurance agent-general of Freiburg in Baden replied, asking for my picture and particulars regarding myself, and after receiving them engaged me.

The only clerk in the office, I had to work at my desk for ten hours every day. The man who employed me was stern, parsimonious, crafty, very hard to please ; his manners were impeccable, his demeanor that of a lieutenant in the reserve. One Sunday morning, when I had gone into the office to finish an urgent piece of work, he made his appearance there also, praised my zeal and then suggested that I let the work wait and go to church instead. Somewhat astonished at his ignorance on this point, I told him what there was to tell. His face underwent a terrifying change. After a furious silence he accused

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me of intentional failure to inform him on this matter, and stated that it had been incumbent on me to give all the facts regarding my religion in my letter of application ; he had thought of no such eventuality, for my photograph and my appearance had deceived him ; and he felt himself to be the victim of a fraud. Beyond this he said nothing. But as he did not dare throw me out on the street at once he began to vent all his spite on me, found fault with every stroke of the pen, with every address I wrote. He laid a trap for me by giving all the cash of the agency into my charge, basely anticipating that since he had not yet made the promised refund of my travel expenses I would embezzle some of the money ; for he knew that I was very poor. And it did happen that while he was away for a few days I took two thalers from the cash-box ; I could not do otherwise in my need. I confessed it to him at once, and asked him to count the money as an advance on my salary. But he smiled derisively. For now he had a pretext for getting



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rid of me; and so he discharged me on the spot.

The weeks that followed were an evil time. Lacking all means of support, I wandered about in the Black Forest of the Breisgau, spending rainy nights in woodcutters' huts. I would have starved had not some peasants supplied me with bread and milk, at the request of their children. These were children from a lakeside village who attended school in Freiburg. I would often walk through the woods with them in the evening, and tell them all sorts of stories as we walked. This gained me their affection. But then I could no longer endure this life. I sold what I could spare of my possessions—a coat, a few books, my watch—and set out for Zurich, where I arrived safely after many tribulations, and where my friend received me with a delight that moved me deeply and made up for all my sufferings.

My friend's circumstances also were straitened, it developed ; having quarreled with his employer he had been forced to leave his position, and had found no other as yet. Our mode of life was as follows : we slept all day in his room, and in the evenings went to a café where a friendly waiter granted us credit. There we drank coffee with milk and ate a stupendous number of rolls—our only meal in the twenty-four hours. At this café we stayed and talked until late at night ; then we went home, my friend got into bed and I lay down on a borrowed mattress, and we continued talking until the morning dawned.

The Freiburg incident was a constant torment to me. My friend noticed that I was keeping something from him, for I had not been able to bring myself to tell him about it, but had ex-

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plained my flight as due to some unimportant dispute. With delicate tact he finally managed to make me divulge my secret, and thereafter many of our nocturnal conversations centered about this theme.

That intrinsically minor incident brought us to generalizations and discussions of life as a whole, and then back again to the strictly personal subject of my own existence. And after we had traveled many such roads together a gulf suddenly appeared between us.

I confessed to him something to which I could not reconcile myself, something which I had always refused to admit to myself : I felt as a member of a nation, equal to others in human status and civic rights ; but if any one could, without adequate reason and without laying himself open to condemnation, treat me as a creature of a lower order—then either my sentiment was based on error, or the understanding which had seemed to support that sentiment was fallacious and deceptive.

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He replied that the hostility was directed not against me but against my race, against my identification with a foreign body within the nation. I was prepared to hear this argument, but could not answer it without feeling a sense of shame and indignation.

Granted, I said, that these strangers are your guests—why do you trample upon all the laws of hospitality, which are also the laws of humanity? And if we assume that you regard them as annoying intruders—why do you tolerate them and commit the hypocrisy of making humane pacts? Better open warfare than this living under the same roof in sham peace and hidden hate.

Well, was his mystifying comment, the Jews are a part of us; however things are, they are a part of us.

I protested. They are a part of you, and yet you treat them like rats, like parasites?

He replied: Who would think of such a thing? Only political and social mischief-makers do

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that. Enlightened Germans know what they owe the Jews and that the future will only increase their debt to the Jews.

Jews and Germans—I could not grasp this division, nor could I forget it; I thought about it long and strenuously in order to make it clear to myself. I asked: What is the dividing factor? The difference in faith? But I am not a believer in the Jewish faith, just as you are no believing Christian. The difference in blood? But who is competent to judge blood? German blood has been mixed with that of French immigrants, with that of Slavs and Norsemen and Spaniards and Italians, probably also with the blood of the Huns and Mongols when their hordes invaded German territory. Excellent, exemplary Germans of definitely non-German descent might be named—artists and generals, poets and scholars, princes and even kings. Can the two thousand years of the Jews' life in the West have failed to modify their

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blood ? Though it be alien blood have not the air and the soil and the water, history and a common destiny, action and work in common had their effect, even if we exclude actual physical interbreeding ? Despite their own laws and the resistance of the nations they could not escape the natural law. Or are they of a different moral constitution, human beings of another cast ?

That might be so, he answered. To him they seemed to be of a different moral constitution, human beings of another cast. Perhaps this was the critical point.

Thereupon I : Surely he did not mean that that insurance agent of Freiburg had not been impelled by a petty, malicious and mischievous prejudice ?

No, he did not mean that. But what happens on a lower plane is no criterion whereby to judge the views held on a higher. Just as a legislature cannot be held responsible for trespasses on the part of the executive power.

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He felt, therefore, that my moral constitution differed from his, that I was a human being of another cast ?

Instead of replying he asked me, very seriously and solemnly, whether—word of honor—I really felt as a Jew. I hesitated. I wanted to know the purpose of the question.

He laughed, saying he could clearly see my difficulty in placing myself. The concept *Jew* was not easy to define.

Of course, I rejoined. No easier than the concept *German*.

He wanted to know whether there was any doubt as to my mother's having been Jewish, and whether any case of racial mixture, or even the suspicion of it, had ever occurred in my family. When, smiling, I answered both questions in the negative he shook his head and observed that my case was extraordinarily interesting—a most unusual case.

I insisted upon his explaining what he meant by “my case.” I tried to help him by saying :

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The fact that among Germans I feel as a German is of no final significance. The German is at liberty to regard this as effrontery or otherwise, to accept me or not. When he accepts me it is condescendingly, by way of exemption, often only temporarily, because something I have achieved has forced him to respect or like me ; or carelessly, negligently, or because it suits his purposes. Admission into a social group merely because the usual bars are let down is offensive and undignified for both sides.

This he conceded. I continued : In my innocence I had always been convinced that I was a part of German life, of the German people, by birth. The language is the breath of life to me. To me it is far more than a means of communication, something casually learned and used ; its words and rhythm constitute my innermost life. It is the building-material for a spiritual world for the fashioning of which I feel a vital urge, though the power is not yet mine. It is as deeply a part of me as if it had been mine through all eter-



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nity. It shaped my character and lighted my way, directed my hand, guided my foot, made my nerves vibrate, taught my heart to feel and my mind to think ; irrevocably it condensed into a unique image all that I had seen, all I had imagined and thought about, all that had reached me through history and the flow of daily life, through the pageant of human destinies and familiarity with great works. Was not this more important than a listing in a register, than a formal confession of faith, than an ingrown prejudice, than a stranger's rôle kept up because of fear and pride on the one side and superstition, malice and inertia on the other ?

Yes and no, answered my friend. These arguments threw light on my particular position ; but in general matters were not at all like that.

I objected that I did not want to dwell on my situation alone, that this would not suffice me.

Said he : Let us first examine the general aspects of the question. As an entity the Jews have never been able to identify themselves dis-

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interestedly with the causes of their host-nations. Within the state they have withdrawn into social and religious isolation, a frozen block in the flowing stream. As long as their isolation was enforced they could claim martyrdom ; but now that the restrictions against them have been lifted their lack of will and capacity for this identification is evident. A morbid pride in their tradition still persists in them. Today still, consciously or unconsciously, they lay stress upon the doctrine revealed to them and to them alone, and regard any other doctrine as false and misleading. And inevitably their undying hate had to turn against Christianity in particular, for toward it their feeling was that of a mother whose womb had given birth to a traitor—the betrayer of their people, of mankind, of God. What is comparable to such hatred? What can mitigate it? Only this hate can, perhaps, explain the power of resistance, the patience of the tribe, their endurance of suffering and their unexampled vitality. The determina-

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tion to wreak vengeance for what they have suffered has probably been rooted in their souls for generations, has penetrated every cell of their bodies, so to speak. The individual who has developed differently can do nothing against this, cannot be taken as proof that this is not so. Instincts of this sort continue their functioning under the surface ; no agreement between well-intentioned enlighteners, no sorrow on the part of those who have left the main body, no example set by those who have changed can do away with them.

It was painful for me to hear this. I pointed out that herein lay the tragedy of the petrified misunderstanding and malicious persecution ; but he did not agree, replying that, like so many others, I was the victim of a cultural delusion. How long, he asked, is it since the Jews have progressed beyond a barbarically low mode of life ? Even in the eighteenth century they obdurately maintained their alienation, their gloomy seclusion. The old Goethe regarded the

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Jew approximately as the American today regards the nigger ; this despite Nathan the Wise, despite Spinoza and Moses Mendelssohn, despite the Jewish influence manifest in the rising Romantic movement, despite his undoubted appreciation of the veneration due the historic Jewish institutions, the religious and social communities. The childhood impressions he had received in the Frankfort ghetto were stronger.

The Jews always recall the oppression and persecution to which they were subjected when attention is called to objectionable traits in their racial demeanor. No Jew will tolerate an objective judgment of Jews—not to mention an unfavorable view—not even of individuals, though they be degenerates, the moment the slightest reflection is cast upon Jewry as a whole. The sad result of this fault is the tendency to speak of Jews in either the glozing tones of the apologist or the hideous accents of slander. Their eulogists all emphasize the absolute moral purity of the Jews and how invariably they are

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law-abiding, as if no Jew had ever stepped over the line. Yet the robber bands that rendered central Germany and the lower Rhenish country unsafe between 1750 and 1820 included a considerable number of Jews, prowlers, thieves and receivers of stolen goods. I will not speak of the Shylocks of every degree, the ruthless usurers and unscrupulous speculators. It would be absurd to think that these millions of people—advancing through the centuries in an unsafe social position, almost entirely unprotected, their lives and property always in danger—are under greater obligation than their jailers and tormentors to conduct themselves irreproachably, that their criminals are more abominable than others. To be entirely just one must take the opposed point of view. The charge against them, however, is of a more fundamental nature. It concerns their incapacity for spiritual adaptation. Their intellectual adaptability is extraordinary, even too great for their own good. But spiritually they have, as an entity, as a racial identity,

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remained to this day what they were in biblical antiquity.

In this sense my friend spoke at great length, defending his views almost dictatorially. I remember that I could not escape the logic and force of his arguments. Naturally, of course, our conversation is not reported here in full ; as a matter of fact we had many conversations on the subject, and what I have given here is an abstract, the essence of what was said. He was inexorable ; and I, who wanted to get at the bottom of things, loved him for this unyieldingness, though vaguely I felt that in our united striving for the truth he set himself above me and that the essential recognition which we finally reached did not bring him the liberation and relief that it gave me, to whom it opened a door and pointed out a goal. I sensed a subterranean warfare, a shadowy tension, and knew that more and more he was becoming my adversary.

The so-called emancipation undoubtedly marked an epoch in the life of the Jews, he con-

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tinued ; the nineteenth-century movement of humanity ended their pariahdom. Every decade brought them closer to us, binding them to us with the—let us admit, external—ties of common political, economic and even patriotic interests ; in any case, ties sanctioned by law and frequently born of free choice, a fine obliviousness and moral insight. But save in the case of exceptional individuals the relationship never became unconditional, unconditionally human. Why ? Is it because they try none the less to preserve their identity as Jews ? Again, why ? As long as they were despised it was their privilege and their duty, their armor and their weapon, their consolation and their means to self-respect to isolate themselves, to develop their narrow community, to nurse a nationhood half illusory and imaginary and hence all the sweeter, more fascinating and tragically exalting. After the way to a common life with us had been cleared their intellectual character changed with amazing rapidity : with amazing resilience they

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made our needs theirs and theirs ours, followed the dictates of the common weal, devoted their marvelous gifts to art and science and social progress. But fundamentally they remained Jews. I do not say they should have become Christians, though many did so for reasons of expediency, or because they no longer felt bound to their people, or even out of conviction. The question is whether they can become Christians in any but the superficial sense, as the majority of Christians themselves are; the question is whether, after conversion, they stop being Jews in the deeper sense. We do not know, and have no way of finding out. I believe that the ancient influences continue effective. Jewishness is like a strong flavor; a minute quantity suffices to give a specific character—or, at least, traces of it—to an incomparably greater mass. True, they have, in a certain sense, become Germans. But something opposes this. What might it be? Is it their peculiar spiritual inflexibility, in contrast to their intellectual mobil-



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ity and fluidity? That explanation is inadequate and incomplete. Nor is it the power of tradition. Not exclusively, at any rate, or no longer. The demands of life modify and overcome tradition ; the discipline of tradition erects a useful barrier against extremism and excessive individualism ; as a political maxim it makes for conservatism and safeguards the nation against revolutionary change. But it is precisely extremism and excessive individualism and a passion for radical change with which we must charge the Jews. What, therefore, is that opposing force ?

I told him that his dangerous mistake lay in generalization. There are Jews of various sorts. All lump judgments are distorted and lead to violent perversion, to exploitation for partisan purposes. Why not look humanly at the individual human being alone ? Fault-finding frequently gives rise to faults, and exaggeration is born of repetition. The Jews must be given time. Many of them, hounded, intimidated

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and shackled, hardly know of their right to breathe ; a constant influx from turbid sources infects regions that have been cleansed. Many, tormented by the latent hatred, determined to sacrifice themselves, are driven to self-renunciation. Still others are intoxicated by the unaccustomed expanse of space and abundance of opportunities. And any Jewish tribunal that one might imagine would acquit no one whom a Christian or German court would declare guilty. Yet all the time I felt that my defense could not parry my friend's blows, for I spoke from a much lower standpoint. Only much later, after decades of inner struggle, was I able to answer his question, his "What is that opposing force ?"—that question whose justification I had denied but which none the less drove me to sincere self-analysis.

From the earliest times the Jews have designated themselves the Chosen People. The proclamation of their faith in their election and their mission occurs in all their myths. With-

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out examining the sufficiency or insufficiency of their reasons for this belief in their mission—whether it is based on revelation, on their relationship with things loved, on their historic or legendary destiny—one can yet see clearly that on the one hand conviction clung to so obstinately for thousands of years involves unusually great obligations which the group can never wholly fulfill, and that it engenders an abnormal state of moral tension whose inevitable result is a series of reactions that fill the life of the group with catastrophic occurrences. While on the other hand such an axiom, when made the basis of a national existence, paralyzes moral development and supplants it with moral quietism, which leads to arrogance and self-righteousness.

The tragedy of the Jew's life is the union in his soul of a sense of superiority and a sense of inferiority. He must live and find a balance in the constant conflict and friction between these two emotional currents. I have found this in almost every Jew I have met ; it constitutes the

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most fundamental, most difficult and most important part of the Jewish problem.

From the simple, human point of view, however, the fact that one is a Jew makes for neither superiority nor inferiority.

I have come to realize that a race cannot be permanently the Chosen People, and that it cannot permanently designate itself as such, without conflicting with the proper order of things as seen by other nations. The chosen individual always is in a position to assume responsibility for his acts ; but in the case of a chosen people the individual gradually takes on a rôle to which he is not entitled and for which he is not fitted, but which leads him to claim for himself the advantages of the group position the while he shifts his responsibilities upon the group. Even if we should grant that a single magnificent achievement might entitle a people to call itself the Chosen People for all time—how can such a claim be secured and defended against criticism, against the new demands of a new age ?

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How is the complex "people" to be defined? Can mere profession of a faith suffice for election? That would be irrational and immoral.

For a people the idea of election is justified only within a temporal limit. To sever it from its historic context and, so to speak, project it into eternity is iniquitous. The election of the individual, however, is eternal and has its roots in eternity.

THE talks with my friend, a constant duel of opinions held in check by affectionate mutual interest, were of far-reaching significance for me and provided a much broader basis for the world of my ideas and emotions. At times it seemed to me as if making my peace with him would be equivalent to making peace with all mankind. But it was difficult to define the conditions of such a peace, or even to outline them unmistakably.

The question which my friend, less by what he said than by his attitude, asked me to decide was this : Are you a Jew or are you a German ? Do you want to be a Jew or a German ? And at that time this decision was important for me. I felt compelled to determine on one or the other direction, although I did not see the path that

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would lead me in either the one or the other. In what respect would matters grow better or worse for me after the decision should have been made? And could the phrase alone, the resolve alone, the change of direction alone, be decisive? I sought a precedent and an example, I sought encouragement and corroboration from those who had gone before me in one direction or the other. But my search was futile.

In my youth Heinrich Heine still was a powerful name in the intellectual circles of Germany. Heine was referred to whenever the talk turned to Jewish attainment, Jewish achievement, Jewish eminence. Nor was it, by any means, Jews alone who grew enthusiastic about Heine; the influence and prestige of this poet stirred a broad cross-section of the nation, extending beyond the artistic and poetic domain into the political and social. Furthermore, he is admittedly one of the few Germans who have gained the esteem and admiration of France. Cultured and enlightened people read Heine, quoted him, cited him;

the sphere of his admirers extended from, say, my young student friend in Munich, who knew dozens of Heine's poems by heart and reveled in Heinesque turns of phrase, to the Empress of Austria, who idolized him and erected a temple to him. I could not understand it. Today I recognize it as the typical expression of a definite state of civilization—one in which talent prevails over humanity. In the latter half of the nineteenth century an altar was set up, so to speak, to talent, just as one had been set up to genius in the latter half of the eighteenth. But at that time the concept of genius embraced that of humanity also, in all its manifestations, even when they were disagreeable; whereas talent-worship—under whose curious influence, so difficult to analyze, the world still stands today—has as its object isolated intellectual achievement. For this Heine is virtually the classical example.

From the very beginning I disliked Heine, indeed, abhorred him violently. His poetry, com-



pared to that of Goethe, Hölderlin or Mörike, seemed to me sweetish, frivolous and crudely sentimental. His prose aroused my antipathy by its straining for witty piquancy, by its mixture of levity and rank melancholy. His critical, polemic and political writings impressed me as either shallow and superficially brilliant or spurious and vain. I had little understanding for the satirical quality wherein lies their greatest power ; and his so-called last poems, which sound notes of moving sincerity, to me appeared questionable due to a certain self-approval in sorrow.

Doubtless my opinion and the feeling that supported it were unjust. Probably that injustice, which I made no effort to restrain, had as its basis the circumstance that something I considered harmful and destructive was supposed to be inviolable and exemplary and worthy of emulation. I decided to mention this subject only after a struggle, only because this fragment of truth is part of the whole truth ; for in recent years there have come to the fore many who as-

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sail and despise Heine—with arguments good and bad, but usually bad, with weapons clean or defiled, but mostly defiled. The fact that those who hate blindly and those who agitate invidiously are in the wrong does not prove that wrong is really being done. Suppressing or coloring matters does not strengthen a weak cause. Possibly the underlying cause of my irritation was Heine's blood. A time-conditioned figure, he was Jewish in a time-conditioned sense ; the most striking thing about him is the rude contiguity of ghetto spirit and cosmopolitanism, of Jewish bourgeoisie and Europeanism, of poetic imagination and a talmudic-Jewish fondness for plays on words, ornamental words, fanciful words. The latter combination, erroneously called romantic irony, actually is a result of the miraculous Jewish adaptability and of a deep-lying inner uncertainty of life and the world. From this source, too, springs his journalistic ability. Heine may, indeed, be called the creator not of journalism but of its offshoot,

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feuilletonism, that sorry substitute for criticism, observation, opinion and stylistic form, a narcotic for a society in its decline, a means of cloaking responsibilities.

Undoubtedly Heine was a Jew quite ingenuously ; quite ingenuously, too, he was a German. He bewailed his Jewish fate and his Jewish sorrow, and betrayed the Jew in him. He proclaimed himself a German patriot, a German émigré, a German by birth and choice, and betrayed the German in him. This, too, I am sure, quite ingenuously. First and foremost he was the man of talent, a man without divine ties or true affinities, disastrously isolated, thrown entirely upon his own resources, devoid of mythic and mother elements, with no hold on either heaven or earth. When I heard him praised I always felt betrayed. Why I can hardly explain ; but it seemed to me that I stood at the opposite pole, that I would have to vanquish his work, his image, his influence, ere my work, my image, my influence could commence. All Jews

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liked to hear the name of Heinrich Heine. To me, however, it seemed that they ought to fear him ; for he enticed them to leave the straight and fertile path, and set up for decades to come a distorted figure of the Jew and of the Jewish German. People asked me : Why do you dwell so persistently on Heine ? Why not regard those who repel you less or not at all ? There is Felix Mendelssohn, there is Börne, there is the marvelous Rachel, there is Disraeli, there are Lassalle and Marx, there is, finally, Spinoza ; all these are of noble cast, the last-named a man of loftiest sublimity, no longer a Jew, emerged from the narrow frame of creed and sect, a true human being, a beacon for the ages. And I did learn to regard them. They too represented temptation and danger, but they fitted more readily into the sequence of things envisaged and experienced. Heine simultaneously included and excluded too much of the present ; he was the wound I had recently suffered.

It was through great men of opposed char-

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acter that I effected a cure. It would take me too far afield to enumerate them here, to describe their influence, from Cervantes to Turgenev and Dostoyevski, from Dickens, Thackeray, Richardson and Balzac to Keller, Gotthelf, Arnim and Kleist ; or to tell of the passionate interest they aroused in me, the hunger for life and vitality for art and its forms ; or to relate how I clung to these mighty spirits, how ardently and devotedly I worshiped them. In them I sought the world, time, humanity, imagery, that liquid fire of the ineffable which like a spiritual ocean current encircles the island of the soul. I studied much history too at that time, always proceeding more and more from the general to the particular, this partly because of a liking for matters pertaining to personal destinies, partly because I craved material and the substance of life. Besides I dabbled in astronomy, out of romantic caprice, because I yearned for soul-shaking emotion and because I was disgusted with the crushing hopelessness of my situation.

EVENTUALLY my friend wearied of me. I did not know what to do with myself and had no prospect of earning my livelihood, for I had learned nothing useful and was fit for no practical works. My friend, forced by necessity, his limited resources now exhausted, resumed old associations. By this means we kept our heads above water for a while ; but the aid we received involved a baleful loss of freedom and compelled us to sink again into the dull and poisonous life of barroom carousal. For some reason these people did not like me, and when, in the course of a sail on the Lake of Zurich, a gust of wind robbed me of my old straw hat, I became a butt of ridicule also. My friend, grown timorous and cowardly, forsook me ; surrounded by enemies now, I felt ill at ease. It was decided that I

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should seek employment in a newspaper office. I was given a list of addresses and, a borrowed felt hat on my head, had to make the rounds for days. Aversion stood clearly written on my face, the idea of becoming a journalist filled me with repugnance. Probably, moreover, my appearance did not create a favorable impression ; in any case, my errands were all unsuccessful. Thereupon the others held a council of war that resulted in two decisions : first, to buy me a new hat ; and secondly, to raise, by means of a collection, the money necessary for a trip to Munich, where my father was then living. These things were done. In addition to the hat, I believe, about twenty francs were collected ; my companions bought a ticket to Lindau with this, and gave the remaining money to me.

As far as I remember, the leave-taking from my friend was half-hearted and bitter. I also recall that on the train, between Zurich and Lake Constance, I was seized with pangs of hunger and, unable to withstand the temptation to eat

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my fill after so long a time, used for this purpose some of the money meant for the rest of my fare home. Later, as I stood in the Lindau station a few minutes before the departure of the Munich train, I must have looked conspicuously pathetic. For an old conductor approached me and began to talk to me ; and when I confessed that I did not have the money for my trip he let me board the train none the less and later handed me a ticket, saying that because of my honest face he was sure I would reimburse him. On the ticket he had written his Munich address, which I kept in mind. The kindness of that conductor, however, led to a terrible scene with my stepmother. I went at once to my father's house, and found that my father was out of the city. I could see clearly that he was very poor, yet I asked his wife to give me the money for the conductor—ten or twelve marks. She refused angrily ; I persisted, pleaded more urgently ; beside herself with fury, she hurled reproaches and insults at me and ordered me to



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leave the house. That made me lose my senses ; I reached for a kitchen knife and stepped up to her menacingly. Now she suddenly yielded, perhaps because the sight of me had frightened her or because she instinctively grasped my desperation. In a little while she brought me a silver bracelet that had belonged to my mother, and told me I might pawn it.

This, of course, caused a complete rupture with my father. On his return he wrote me only a brief note that moved me because of an unwonted sparing expression of grief. In his eyes I now was totally worthless and vile. All this must be related because otherwise I could not properly explain the period of my life immediately following upon that quarrel. For those were months of such total isolation and abandonment, such strangling poverty as one rarely finds even in a modern metropolis ; survival required an extraordinary power of resistance. I lived on apples, cheese and lettuce. The lettuce would appear every morning in a bowl beside

the door of my tiny garret chamber ; a woman who lived opposite me, and who had learned of my helpless plight, practised charity in this delicate manner. When I thanked her one day she silently shook her head. But I could not have continued living even in this way had not my father occasionally sent me a letter into which he had slipped some postage stamps, which I then sold ; he had to put them in secretly, unbeknown to his wife. I also made the acquaintance of a recorder—ambitious, avid for honors, a historian *ad usum delphini*—who employed me as a copyist for a time. He was one of those conscienceless oppressors not uncommonly found in subordinate positions. To abuse his power and to turn my need to his advantage gave him cynical delight. Himself humbly situated, he found pleasure in absolute mastery over one even more downtrodden. After I had spent a week copying his excerpts and had delivered ten or fifteen sheets he would pay me a thaler or a thaler and a half, as the fancy would happen

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to strike him. On some days I would earn twenty or thirty pfennige by playing chess in an obscure café, but I had to be careful to avoid contests with players stronger than I.

That my physical condition grew worse and worse goes without saying. I fell ill with gastric hemorrhages, but cured myself with a stringent self-prescribed rice diet. Externally I had to neglect myself almost entirely, although I exercised all possible vigilance to keep my clothes free of spots, holes and patches. Inwardly I fell into a curious state, a half-tormented, half-blissful tension out of which figures, images and events slowly emerged. My daily life was an agitated dream ; the nights I spent at work, sleeping only a few hours. My isolation, the total absence of companionship and opportunity for discussion, produced a recurrent extravagant ecstasy that finally became latent and with which an equally extravagant lasting fear sometimes alternated. I had hallucinations and talked to myself ; and I remember that

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one night I ran through the streets in an autumnal rain from midnight until three o'clock, filled with dread because I believed myself pursued by an irreconcilable foe whose face and form I somehow knew exactly.

Things like this happened fairly often. But I did not grow at all despondent—at least, not in my innermost soul—or embittered or accusatory or misanthropic. I do not think that I am guilty of retrospective idealization when I say that I shed external troubles as an oiled surface sheds water. I felt an inexhaustible store of strength within me. The external ills I had to suffer seemed entirely unrelated to my inner being. What had to be endured I met with endurance and no more. It was not exactly assurance that made me strong. Assurance involves conscious self-confidence; and that I did not have, not even where my work was concerned. For though my work set me aflame I felt its immaturity and inadequacy as soon as the flame had burned itself out, so that I went

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back to the beginning again and again with an almost objective perseverance. As one looks back decades later it is, of course, difficult to subject all the stages of one's development to a rigorous examination that will leave no flattering veil over any particular scene. But however closely I scrutinize myself and that period two facts remain unassailable : First, that in the midst of a German city my relationship to the world was that of Robinson Crusoe on his isle ; and secondly, that I could endure this long and gloomy isolation only because I lived like a silkworm in its cocoon, in a dull state of vague expectancy. True, I was acutely sensitive to everything that went on, to men and things and voices, to every color and tone, every word and breath ; but I was sensitive as in a dream, like one in whom there is being born something in which he has only the share deriving from his mere existence, while for the rest he serves only as an instrument.

FROM the social point of view I had to feel myself an outcast ; and I was one, for I lived like one. Those who have risen from the depths are very prone, once they have reached a certain height, to brighten their dismal experiences with a golden lining. They forget their abasement all the more readily because it forced them to be base, to think basely, to deal basely. That is unavoidable, and whoever denies it lies. In the most favorable case much time and much moral effort are required before the soul can be cleansed of the filth and rubbish which were thrown upon it and with which it covered itself. A veritable renewal is necessary ; and only after such renewal has taken place do the fruit and meaning of past suffering become manifest. While he is in agony man is quite incapable of assimilating experiences and drawing conclu-

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sions ; a fear-filled spirit can neither teach nor give form. Those spectators who ascribe creative power to misery make their error because the countless thousands who are engulfed in misery are not able to refute that impudent dictum of the comfortable. Those who have escaped the peril may sing its praises ; but he who is safe should exercise restraint even when he eulogizes those who risk their lives for him.

It was for society that I longed as I stood on its brink, a hair's breadth from the abyss. To be accepted and recognized as an equal among equals was my paramount desire. The question of whether I was a Jew or a German had, for the time being, become subordinated to the problem of how I could come to my fellow men. Sometimes I felt as if I were paying off my share of the guilt and odium attached to Jewry and as if that atonement would somehow become obvious and demonstrable. A number of chance happenings that occurred from time to time put an end to the black hopelessness, if not to my

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material difficulties ; most important of all, they cleared spiritual roads and broke open the locked door before which I had watched and waited.

I became the secretary of a highly esteemed author who, though himself no longer young, had taken up the cause of youth ; this, incidentally, did not harmonize with his inborn gifts, which tended rather into pleasanter, well-trodden paths. He dictated his novels and stories to me ; and when, after some time, I ventured to submit to him some of my own work he evinced a surprise from which I could see that I had not labored in vain. He was the first to encourage me, the first, indeed, to regard my literary efforts with unreserved seriousness ; for me that meant salvation and deliverance. But he did more. He used his prestige for me and those very crude, very questionable products of mine. Mockery and obstruction could not deter him ; in fact, mockery and obstruction inflamed him to unrestrained enthusiasm, and he hurled himself into feuds with characteristic impetuosity. Quite un-



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expectedly I found myself the center of a clash of opinions—a development that filled me with dejection rather than pride.

But I set my foot on the bridges that now lay before me, and soon felt myself hurled into the confusions of the world. That is, I mistook a grotesque illusion for the world; it simulated freedom, breadth and dignity, but actually was restricted, narrow and commonplace. Even long after I had rid myself of this delusion that which I here call *the world* remained undiscoverable for me; the more I strained to find it, the more I longed for it, the more shadowy its existence appeared to me. Yet I needed it, if my own existence was not to be a shadow.

Then as now, among us as in every other nation, the circle of literary life embraced representatives of all castes and classes. It is easy to believe that here a selection has been made of the finest and most able; but that is not so. It is easy to believe in a community come together on a plane higher than the flat level of

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everyday life, a community which, because of the selection that has been made, is ideal in its nature and its activities. But that is not so. No selection has been made, nor has a community come into being. There is only a fortuitous interacting, reacting and counteracting of individuals who are more or less gifted, more or less good, more or less resolute, ambitious or embittered or excitable. The majority are fugitives, derailed souls, hurt and made ill by society; perilously situated all. All, whether they are proletarian, middle-class or aristocratic, have fled their own circle, their own earth, to become not free but free-lances. Hence they do not build on a given foundation. They must first construct their foundation, each for himself and in his own way. So that from the first they fritter away strength and energy and mental power for something whose possession should be a matter of course. They squander themselves and wall themselves in. Not one of them has any attachment to the people or receives its support; in-

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deed, the people suspects and denies them. There is no middle ground and no agreement, no mutual confidence, often not even respect for work. And though a group consist of those who are truly qualified, factions and supercilious cliques arise none the less.

It does not take long to find comrades who will think what you think, say what you say. But accord in conversation and the preservation of spiritual continuity are two different things. Jealousy and pettiness, envy and sneers constantly lurk behind the door. The unsuccessful and the candidates for success form a closed phalanx against those who have the slightest advantage ; it takes a powerful personality to quash the doubts of those who pretend objectivity without possessing it. These doubts are an outgrowth of despair or lead to it ; and this despair, again, indicates deficient discipline and deficient thought, deficient accord and deficient responsibility. I have seen frenzied enthusiasm for a name be transformed into cold reserve the mo-

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ment that name became a living man. Only the remote could hold its own. Distance alone could confer and maintain renown ; in any other case everything was misused for purposes of policy.

No doubt I was no better myself. The air one breathes modifies one's complexion. But I was troubled by my lost illusions. I was troubled by the low standards which reality compelled me to use. I was troubled by not being finer and not being able to become finer ; and I was vexed by the mask I had to wear when loftier desires and loftier considerations required dissembling. Dissimulation is hard to learn, yet in its noblest form it constitutes a dictate of humanity. Nothing is more crude and useless than to demand the truth and publish the truth in such a way as to bewilder and perplex minds whose precarious happiness depends on dreams and delusions. To avoid this and yet to be sincere in another sense is a task in itself, which, for that matter, lies far beyond the literary domain in the realm of self-discipline and love. For love

is not inborn either, love too must be learned.

In this witches' cauldron of intellectuality and dullness of heart, arrogance and unsubstantial opposition, I was often overcome by discouragement, by a sense of shame at all those tumbling, stumbling selves among whom I too now was numbered, but who from far away had seemed to me superhuman creatures dwelling in an enchanted garden. At times I was moved to wonder whether the narrow spitefulness, the pecuniary squabbling combined with the striving toward universal goals, the provincial dullness and brutal ambition, the mistrust and stubborn misunderstanding where achievement and perfection, ideas and an exchange of impulses were at stake, where thoughts and images were concerned—whether all this was a peculiarly German disease or a by-product of the *métier* as such, its somber lining, the same with us as in other lands. I had the following experience with a young French author I had met: I had come quite close to him, we had had fruitful talks, and

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on a certain occasion he had presented me with a book he had written and into which he had put a cordial inscription. Shortly thereafter I fell into a condition of such financial stringency that this book became my last resource, and I sold it to a second-hand dealer for a tiny sum. Tiny, but enough to cover my expenses for two or three days. As we lived in the same house I could not avoid seeing the Frenchman, my uneasy conscience notwithstanding. And one day I noticed that his attitude toward me had changed ; when he met me he seemed shyly sad, mutely reproachful. Unable to understand his demeanor, I withdrew into myself, although I regretted the end of the friendship. Only after he had left the city did I learn the reason, which amazed as much as it distressed me. For in that second-hand shop he had, by chance, found his book, with his inscription still in it ; grown hard and rude in my need, I had lacked the good sense and the tact to erase that indication of a personal relationship. He had waited until he had gone away ; now he

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returned the book to me, and with it sent a letter. That letter was a document of the utmost delicacy and nobility. I doubt that I have ever seen any other like it, or that any one ever so thoroughly taught me a lesson, so subtly shamed me. He had guessed what had driven me to that ugly deed ; he did not mention that he had felt hurt ; he reproached me only with lack of confidence in him. He wrote, more or less : "Come to Paris. You may encounter there a number of things with which you will find fault, a number of things less attractive and solid and sound than in your country. But among the intellectuals and the men of our vocation you will find something the lack of which was painfully apparent to me in Germany : real comradeship, courtesy and mutual esteem."

Later I discovered this to be true. A knowledge of Latin intellectual and social life makes it clearly understandable. German life is disunited, disunited to the core. German evolution goes by jerks ; periods of flourishing prosperity end in sudden desolation ; greatness has unbe-

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lievable concomitants. Connections and transitions are lacking between moving parts, so that a living element is welded to one devoid of life and an insurmountable wall stands between caste and caste. There is no center, and never was ; the four decades of the united empire could not even bring a governmental center into being. Artists and men of letters, where they could not be squeezed into minor official posts, were lost individuals whose position depended on the accident of economic success. One social stratum condemns what another praises ; traditions collapse overnight, education destroys imagery, learning counteracts old teachings, opinions crowd out meaning, success ends continuity, whims take the place of love and activity supplants impelling force.

All this I learned and had to learn, for my character inevitably had to dominate, so to speak, my whole body. I had now outgrown my vague dreaming and had to seek forms and contents of my own ; their innate elements needed to be cor-



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related with reality and complemented by it. Tasks appeared before me. I felt a vocation for epic writing ; that would enable me to survive with my age and in my age. Symbolism and ideas were the products of inspiration, of imagination ; color, fire and passion had their source in the blood, in intuition, in the inner constitution ; but what of the outward factors, what of all that was to serve me as aliment, impetus, framework, foundation, "material" ? There no unity or form existed, no harmony or organic birth. German life was devoid of a central point, loosely compounded piece by piece, person by person, city by city, state by state. The Frenchman needs only to set down the name *Paris*, and that word is a nucleus comprising an immensity of development and events, the seal, as it were, of the reality *society*, the reality *nation*, the reality *France*. It embodies a very definite number of given facts, transcendent facts to which the hands and minds of his predecessors gave distinctiveness, form, credibility and the

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final stamp. The Englishman has before him a century-old road of public and private life, conventions that cannot be overthrown. The Italian is covered by his connection with the great past that still sustains him, with the aid of the landscape and the language; and as a creative artist he is almost always certain of reverence from even the most humble of his people. In Russia tradition and a finished form of life are replaced by a curious freedom and ease of conduct; man stands flush against man, often in a bizarrely natural and confusing way, for self-segregation in castes and class differences in our sense do not exist there and never did.

The German alone must use invention when he wants to portray social ties and social structure, or society in general, or lives in their relation to society. If he neglects this everything he touches dissolves into uncertainty, fortuity, chimera. His reality then either lacks credibility, because it is exaggerated, frantically simplified and arbitrarily bent out of shape, or it

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remains small, unauthoritative and devoid of any characteristic stamp. Thus the society shown in *Wilhelm Meister* is invention pure and simple, synthetic, metaphoric, schematic. No other literature is weighed down like the German with so heavy a ballast of stories of progression, eccentric tales, inert material, poetic curiosities. In its highest form the German novel can secure grandeur, character and significance only from its creator, who must invent, condense and fabricate to a far greater extent than is generally supposed. The German novel is primarily individual, and usually provincial also, while the English or Russian novel is primarily national, and hence representative of its nation.

No German poet, and surely not one who writes novels—it is only a couple of decades since our professors have permitted a novelist to be called a poet—can ever be representative of his nation in the sense that, say, Balzac was representative of France, Dickens of England, Tolstoi of Russia. The German epic writer hangs in midair,

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plays no part in the life of the people. And if despite this he compels attention and love he feels, at the same time, a curious public resistance and an equally curious hidden obstruction, as if his achievement were incompatible with seriousness and dignity.

The difficulty I saw confronting me was tremendous. How was I to penetrate into those often precisely delimited circles? How pass beyond the flat truth of mere seeing to the deeper truth of perception? I stood on the periphery. Hundreds of others, like myself banished there, made that their boast. But I had nothing to do there. I needed to be in the center or at least in a segment, in a central position; I needed a cross-section, the sheer life of man and his movements unreflected in mirrors; I needed fellowship, human influence, social experience, support, enfolding ties. Instead I found myself rejected and isolated in a triply difficult position: as a man of letters, as a German without social standing, as a Jew detached from my group.

WHEN, at the age of twenty-three, I wrote *Die Juden von Zirndorf* I drew upon the ancient life of my race, upon the tradition and legends of the people as whose scion I necessarily had to regard myself ; yet, at the same time, I wished also to portray the actual life and development of that people in a quasi-legendary, highly simplified and very concise manner. The actual fundament for both I found in the country in which I was born, my Franconian home.

I wrote the book without consciously meditating upon it beforehand, as one relates a dream or as if under an inescapable compulsion. If some one had told me that what I was doing was pure nonsense I might have been shocked, but I would not have felt any real surprise. The book was conceived while I sought escape in the Tyrol, on

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Lake Constance, in Eichstätt, and in a melancholy, out-of-the-way Munich studio where a cat was my sole companion. The manuscript, consisting of little slips of paper covered with finely written lines, always reposed in my breast-pocket. The external conditions of my life at that time were most deplorable. In addition to my accustomed material wretchedness there was a lamentable love affair ; I was involved in adventures and exposed to persecutions otherwise not found except in dime novels. My book, after growing almost to completion, lay untouched for months. Not until I was down with an illness and desperately anxious to reach the end of everything did I scribble down the last few chapters.

The book was self-expression and confession ; it liberated me from the nightmare which had crushed my youth. It also served to liberate many others who were in a transitional stage, and to give them a feeling of self-justification. From the very beginning I appeared with my armor unbuckled, thus gaining those who lacked courage

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or decision. Some, fired with lust to destroy, turned to me with eager demands and announced themselves as disciples ; but I was unable to fulfill their expectations, for I did not remain on the track they had prescribed. Others denounced me ; they considered me a renegade and preferred to have no public discussion whatsoever of the matter, for to them every policy but that of silence appeared both foolish and noxious. The German world—except for a few groups which, standing above the average, were receptive to literature as such and to its images—maintained an attitude of indifference or even hostility ; the general reaction was to give the book its proper place in the museum of literature for the time being and to file its name in the card catalogue. In the eyes of the officials entrusted with the supervision of art and good taste I was an abomination.

I realized myself that the road I had taken could lead but to the wilderness. The question of how to touch the insensitive, how to win those

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who resisted, how to make their world mine and my world theirs then became a question of self-discipline and form. An artist is as naught if his work does not arise to new life in the souls of men ; for this it must have not only a soul, but a body as well. Pathos and words, passion and ideas alone cannot beget a body. I felt the supreme importance of amalgamating abject devotion to art with mastery ; and there began a long, difficult struggle, attempt upon attempt, plan upon plan, study upon study. I swung from the vagueness of dreams to rigidity, from untrammelled composition to prescribed construction, from enthusiasm to dryness, from profound depths to shallowness.

My closest friends failed to understand me ; nor could I explain myself to them, for my actual goal was obscure even in my own mind. But I always knew when an individual, finished piece of work did not ring true. I believed in no applause, adhered to no guidance or school, refused to permit myself to be bound to any achievement



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and, between stages, despaired of ever succeeding. It is extraordinarily difficult to give a lucid description of this struggle. On the one hand I was fighting for self-liberation and self-realization, for purification and exaltation, that is, for objectives of a moral nature ; on the other hand I sought moderation, imagery, perspective—intellectual and artistic goals.

I fought for my own soul and for the soul of the German world. Within myself I was always able to find new springs and reserves ; but the German world refused to yield. I could only adjure it, ever watchful. I had to insist that it pay attention to me, with every achievement I had to convince it afresh of my own worth and the worth of my cause, I had to employ the most fiery persuasion and the most extreme exertion where others needed only to beckon. It did not believe me : I had revealed myself too soon. At times, in individual cases, it deigned to view me favorably—out of graciousness or leniency, or because it could no longer steel itself against me.

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But this attitude never was maintained consistently, so that I was forced, with every piece of work, to begin all over again that Sisyphean labor which always exhausted my strength. Others enjoyed credit facilities ; they were permitted to indulge in indolence at times. I, however, had to present my credentials every time, to risk all I had gained, as one who is not allowed to establish himself upon the land he has acquired and there to sow and reap.

Strangers knew nothing of all this ; my friends wondered, and failed to understand my torment. At times I appeared to them as one consumed by unsatisfied ambition, as one striving for something beyond his powers. They told me I should be content with what I had achieved and spoke in laudatory terms of inferior work, referred to popular successes and literary repute. To them the fact that I was mentioned, read and discussed meant something. They failed to see or hear or feel ; I could not make them comprehend what I was suffering. What I meant was so very deli-

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cate, so very light and fragile, and yet of such incalculable significance! While I lived and worked as an individual I was, in the depths of my soul, closely bound up with a community from which I had been severed and with another which I wanted to gain, which I would gain. I stood on the divide. At times I felt like a pretender without followers or credentials, a John Lackland; the earth seemed to give way under my every step, the air to be drawn out of my lungs. Besides I was filled with a swarming host of still unreleased inner forms and images, and with never-ending material worries.

ELEVEN years after *Die Juden von Zirndorf* I wrote *Caspar Hauser*. I shall dwell largely on these two examples of my work because—and here there is no attempt on my part to utter or challenge an opinion as to their worth—they represent the two poles between which I moved and which limited the field of my search, two poles of which one marked the Jewish problem, the other the German.

The figure of Caspar Hauser had been a familiar one since my childhood. My paternal grandfather, who had been a rope-maker and then a merchant in Zirndorf, had seen him in the Vestnerturm at Nuremberg, and spoke of him as of a very mysterious person. Others too, the most simple and sober people, always talked of him as of a most mysterious phenomenon best

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not discussed aloud. I knew the places where Hauser had spent his queer, troubled life and where he had died, the castle-tower and the Tucher house in Nuremberg, the little street where the teacher Mayer had lived in Ansbach, the garden with the octagon which bears that beautiful inscription ; all the things that had remained, all the scenes that still endured were so magically appropriate to his destiny.

The theme came to me again and again. It addressed me first when I was learning how to shape human beings and to let them grow organically according to their inherent fate ; and then at every stage at which I thought I had attained sufficient smoothness and sureness. Yet again and again I resisted the temptation, as if that figure were something sacred and fragile not to be rashly profaned. Certain books that appeared of their own accord at that time I wrote only as a sort of exercise and preparation ; my first serious attempt was preceded by years of study, of delving into every nook and cranny

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of the documentary evidence and other written matter pertaining to him. Again and again I tried to begin, drew a wide circle or a narrow circle about the theme. But I failed to find the groundwork, I failed to find the repose and the power and the light; I grew discouraged and dropped the work. But, as happens in every case of attempting and despairing, searching and losing hope, the figure of that Nuremberg foundling grew to unexpected stature before my eyes, and for me his destiny became typical of the destiny of the human heart. The human heart against the world: when I had found this formula the mist lifted; and though many difficulties still had to be overcome, my road now was definitely illuminated.

Curious things happened to me while I worked on it. When I had reached the point where Clara von Kannawurf—who gave him his first 'dim inkling of sex-love—enters into Caspar's life, I lost the reality on which I had stood. Not all my straining and thinking and inventing, not

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a hundred new beginnings could make that figure rise before me in genuine and credible form ; I saw myself condemned to a long period of inactive waiting. Then one day I received a letter from an unknown woman who turned to me in her spiritual need. In the tone of her writing lay something so attention-compelling that refusal on my part would have been cruel. She was about to make a journey ; and as she wished to meet me we arranged a rendezvous at a half-way point. We were friends from the first moment ; as a woman and a mother she had a tragic lot to bear. In the course of our talk it developed that her grandfather had occupied a high position in the court of Baden, that he had been involved in the Caspar Hauser agitation and intrigues, which had led even to popular uprisings, and that, maligned and compromised, he had finally shot himself. I was amazed and deeply moved, especially by the profound and anguished concern which this young woman still felt for the foundling's fate ; such concern she

might have felt for a long-lost brother the clearing of whose name, the defense of whose sullied honor she had chosen as her most sacred task. She knew nothing of my work ; I gave her the manuscript, or as much of it as was ready, and her emotion after reading it stirred me also. Her passionate interest in it was almost morbid, feverish, the fever of an offended sense of justice, of sympathy and love. And now suddenly I had found Clara von Kannawurf—and the queerest part of it was that her given name too was Clara. There, in the flesh, she stood before me as I had envisaged her, in her virginal womanhood, her childlike maturity, her experience-born melancholy, in direct contrast to the inert world.

I cannot deny that I looked forward to the publication of the book with unusual hopes, the hopes cherished by one who feels that at last he has authenticated himself. I imagined that I had given the Germans an essentially German book, a book grown out of the soul of the people, so to speak. I imagined that because a Jew had



written it, I had proved that a Jew could establish his oneness with the nation, could overcome the prejudgment of his alien character not only by resolve and by seizing opportunities, but by the inner nature of his being. But these expectations were disappointed. To begin with, a disgusting squabble arose in the newspapers about the historic character Caspar Hauser. A shower of malicious abuse and arrogant rebuke fell upon me, together with the accusation that I had rehashed and dished up the old fiction of the foundling's princely descent only for the amusement of a sensation-loving public. I was informed that Professor Mittelstädt in his famous essay, and the teacher Mayer in his documentary presentation of the case, and any one else you please in his pamphlet, had long ago convinced everybody that Caspar Hauser was a half-witted impostor who had duped German and European public opinion ; that to revive this old wives' tale, now happily buried for half a cen-

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tury, and to make it an object of further discussion and dispute bespoke naïve presumption and ignorance ; and that it were better if in my hunger for literary material I would turn to less controversial fields, themes less calculated to call forth annoyance and vexation.

As it happens I am as convinced today as then that Caspar Hauser really was the young prince whom Daumer and Feuerbach—and after them many others who were surrounded with deathly silence or deadly slander—believed him to be. I have seen and heard enough documentary evidence, trustworthy testimony of this ; some day more will come to light out of archives still insidiously sealed. The meaning of the intrigues is unmistakable ; there are still, in high positions, people who know, and some of them confided in me ; nor did they cherish any doubt on the point which the armchair-psychologists denied so cursorily. Today as then I am convinced that the name, the life and the death of Caspar Hauser

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constitute an unpunished crime the evil of which spreads further and further, as such evil always does.

All this concerns the novel itself only indirectly. And to that extent the attacks missed their mark. I knew the motives behind them, and the places of their origin and guidance. But, petty considerations aside, I felt none the less as if my voice and its echo were dying in an atmosphere that could transmit no sound. What I cared about was not a minor matter, and I had therefore thought minor matters would necessarily be dissipated. What I cared about was not personal in nature, and I had thought the personal would not be considered. Nor had I cared about the applause of any one, about recognition of my achievement, about approval or praise of my labors. In the final analysis, indeed, I had not even cared about the possibility of gaining or stirring individuals, or ennobling and transforming a few rare souls. One always tells oneself—partly for consolation, partly in

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recognition of the average mediocrity of human nature—that enough has been achieved if individuals are moved to thought, if a work helps awaken a feeling for better things in ten out of a thousand ; and that a seed sown in a single receptive breast must bear a thousandfold fruit. True ; but much time is lost thus, and misunderstanding kills inspiration. When one has given all his heart and soul to a matter he cannot and must not be content with the more or less lukewarm support of well-disposed groups ; nor with the salvo of those who share his literary interests ; nor with the winning of new friends through eager, expectant friends ; nor even with the tense gaze of the yearning hearts scattered here and there among men, whether it was by chance that he touched them or by plan and choice. For him a whole is at stake here, the full and broad and deep resounding of a world.

This lies in the very nature of epic art. Its richness depends on an abundance of listeners ; an orchestra cannot play in a small chamber.

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Its effect is a mosaic of partial effects often most heterogeneous, ranging from the melodic to those bluntly dictated by the exigencies of plot, from the delicate to the brutal. In Germany effectiveness on so broad a scale is impossible, for no spiritual harmony exists among the various receptive groups and no forum of esthetics stands above them. The self-proclaimed judges puff half-baked culture or the current vogue, exceed their authority, practice party politics. Little attention is paid to those of true vocation; an esoteric activity must suffice them. But the more feeble, the more spiritless, the more faint-hearted a people's participation in what its creative artists produce, the drossier the works themselves; their bearing grows less certain, their existence less secure, their production more sporadic. These things are correlated according to immutable laws. No sensation, no flare of delirium, no occasional ardor can substitute for unity and sequence, for love of objects and figures, for spiritual accord and intellectual im-

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partiality. Whoever waxes enthusiastic without adequate reason must necessarily repent and fall prey to dejection ; on the morrow he must revile what he acclaimed yesterday. That seems to him the only escape from the maze ; but nothing can restore him to the right track, even his idols are dust-covered.

I learned, therefore, that I had not gained, and never could gain, an inch of ground in the region to which I aspired so fervently and painfully. Again and again I had to read or to feel that in the minds of those others lay one thought : the Jew.

I RECAPITULATE, for it is important to reach a lucid conclusion by means of lucid argumentation. The example is presented in its reference to not the person but the subject.

The idea of *Caspar Hauser* was to show that people of every degree of spiritual and intellectual development, of every type from the grossest to the most refined—the expedience-seeking man of ambition and the philosophic mind, the servile toady and the apostle of humanity, the paid policeman and the teacher ever on the lookout for improvement, the woman aflame with sensual ardor and the noble representative of earthly justice—stand in total apathy and helplessness before the phenomenon of innocence; that the very idea of anything of the sort existing on earth is inconceivable for

them ; that they foist upon such a creature their own purposes, impure as they are or polluted by volition ; that they use him for their intrigues and principles, for the corroboration of this or that law, as the explanation of this or that event ; but that they never see the phenomenon itself, that unique, unparalleled, glorious image of divinity, but instead soil the beautiful, delicate, dream-like quality in him, officiously and sacrilegiously lay hands on him and at last murder him. The giver of the final thrust is only the executive instrument. The others, too, are his murderers, each in his own way : those who love him as well as those who hate, those who teach as well as those who glorify him. As the tortured heart of Clara von Kannawurf cries at the last, all the world becomes his murderer.

These events have as their frame the scene provided by history. A genuinely German world and, I think I may say, truly German people. A German city, German road, German night, German trees, German air and speech. Possibly a



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very highly exalted arbiter could tell me, with an understanding smile : Yourself you cannot judge what your work proclaims of your heritage from your fathers, the ingredients of your blood. Yet I would answer, and in his wisdom he would approve my answer : They who sense this none the less are free of base mania, and rejoice in him who rouses and confirms them. Whether he comes from the East or from the West is immaterial to them ; they feel that only his human voice and sacrifice are important. That much I know of those who are awake.

The others, those for whom I was and remained a Jew, wanted to make me understand that I could not give them satisfaction ; that is, as a Jew. That as a Jew I was incapable of sharing their secret higher life, incapable of stirring their souls or becoming attuned to their character. They would not concede that I too bore the color and stamp of German life ; they would not let the kindred principle approach them. Its unconscious, inherent elements they

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considered deliberately thought out, born of Jewish ingenuity, Jewish shrewdness in pose and misrepresentation, the dangerous Jewish power to delude and ensnare. Of no avail the silent or even expressed conviction that a book like this, sprung from the heart of the nation and entitled to call itself representative of the people as long as it should survive, might have become a beacon-light even for bigoted Germans had its author remained anonymous or unknown ; that at least they would have let themselves be persuaded in this sense, as they did in the case of many a shallower, less significant work, and of many a greater book that they avidly pressed into the service of their machinations. Here was traditional symbolism, the persecuted young prince, pitiful in romantic yearning ; everything, indeed, done in the old manner, except that the end brought no reconciliation and luster, and that fate, with inner logic and outer inevitability, brought everything to its horrible conclusion. What else readers of courage and discernment

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could find there stands written on another page, in its proper place. Only one point is sure : The German public could not be permitted to see that a Jew had written so peculiarly German a book.

Some who were kindly disposed intimated : Yes, this is all very well ; but that brooding rises from an alien source, that psychological digging and delving has nothing in common with the character of our clan. Such, indeed, is the mildest judgment published in most of the popular and widely read histories of literature. (Parenthetically : The mass-reviewal and mass-demolition to be found in the majority of these literary histories, with their scientific pretensions, their unthinking routine procedure, the pedantic tone intended to impress the ignorant and immature, is a veritable disgrace for Germany and makes her ridiculous in the eyes of cultured nations.) And what is published there has become the current opinion. However strenuous my efforts, whatever visions and images I of-

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fered, however high I built, however deep I searched—in the same retorts always brewed the same poison, whose purpose it was to cripple free flight and crush joyful devotion.

It may be objected that every product of creative work meets with opposition and resistance. That the obstruction in my path is but a contortion, a distortion of the hindrance that bars the way to others. That, easily hurt because of hurts suffered throughout the generations, I feel a pinprick as a dagger-thrust, a striking fist as a battering club. That my suspicion alone makes the irresolute appear as my foes and fault-finders as assassins. That I should be mindful of the thorny paths of greater men, and of what I have done and gained in my own circle.

But this is beside the point. The point is not what I have done and gained. The point of the matter is the lie that crawls before me like an ugly worm and from time to time raises its speckled head to spit at me. The horrible, unconquerable lie with which the soul of an entire

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nation has surrounded itself, that lie which no evidence, no sacrifice, no love, no disproof can touch.

Imagine a laborer who, when he asks for his wages, never receives them in full, though his work in no way falls below that of his fellows, and whose question as to the reason for such injustice receives this answer : You cannot demand full pay, for you are pockmarked. He looks into the mirror, finds his face entirely free of pockmarks. He returns : What do you want of me ? I have no pockmarks whatsoever. The others shrug their shoulders as they reply : Your record declares you to be pockmarked, so you are pockmarked. A curious confusion arises in the brain of this man : His rights are restricted under the pretext of an external blemish, and in his agitation at being unable to find and recognize that blemish he neglects to enforce his rights with all the power at his command. A most subtle torture.

And the German, the German zealot, spokes-

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man for many, says to me when I penetrate into his most secret recesses : Any recompense is enough for what you do or make ; you should, indeed, be glad that I permit you to carry on your activities, for it is my firm conviction that nothing you create or build can either serve or please me.

If these are pinpricks they are yet murderous ; if these are striking fists I do not care to taste the battering blows of clubs. The cheers and hosannas of those who stand near one cannot drown out the *pereat* that comes from outside. One must heed those voices from outside. Toward every author the nation adopts a general attitude which determines the freedom of his soul, the sureness of his bearing and an element, very difficult to define, of spiritual rhythm and controlled power. To be accepted without reservations is indispensable for him ; for his work and craft alone fill his hours and years to overflowing with restraints and anguish, not to mention the hideous difficulties of every-day life.

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If he cannot feel that the warmth he emanates generates new warmth, then nature collapses within him. How can he defend himself against a charge that must seem the more senseless the more sincerely he stands in his circle, in his order? What has happened to him because of his Jewishness he may regard as a distinction, or as a crushing blow of fate, or even as a wrong to be expiated; instances of the latter case abound, and I shall come back to them. But never can he understand or learn to endure that in the loftiest, most sacred of all domains two measuring-rods should be used, and that no purification or sanctification—no deed, no renunciation of self, no toil or passion, no figure or image, no melody or vision—can suffice to bring him as a matter of course the confidence and dignity and inviolability which the least of those who stand in the opposed camp enjoys in full. But once he has recognized the vanity of his struggle, where can he find his words and groundwork,

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where the courage to present proofs and proclaim his message ?

In German life figures and images have formal existence only. The German cannot find his way to them, never identifies himself with them ; at most he appropriates an abstract of them. He must be persuaded to accept them, and be convinced of their plausibility. Yet he cannot be persuaded nor really convinced ; he believes only what he is commanded to believe, or what a majority forces him to believe.

Let it be clearly understood : I am not whining for mercy. I am not appearing as a penitent sinner or a *rara avis*. Nor do I wish to display a martyr's crown or to exult in suffering. Nor am I one who, having broken his ties in both camps, seeks refuge in boastful isolation. Nor one who, with the crushed pride and sullen obstinacy of the rejected, lays plots and sows dissension, suddenly rediscovers and clings to venerable ancient relationships because his mem-



bership in the group of his intellectual choice is disputed.

No. The matter must be discussed. An accounting must be rendered, both here and there. Right and justice are at stake. In the final analysis the question is this : Why do you strike the hand that bears testimony for you ?

SUCH testimony appeared again, six years after *Caspar Hauser*, in *Das Gänsemännchen*. Once more I pass over the intermediate books, the experimental attempts, such as, for example, *Der Goldene Spiegel* and *Der Mann von vierzig Jahren*. At that time I was thinking of a cycle which would present the German world at the beginning of the century. *Das Gänsemännchen*, written in 1911, 1912 and 1913, did not appear until the second year of the war; and it happened that this book, unlike any of its predecessors, immediately met with a cordial and widespread response. At the time I often had the impression that the predominant force of the events then occurring lent it a sort of anonymity that enabled it to rest more completely in itself and gave it more forceful effectiveness; a feeling new to me, and very comforting.

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The book contains and gives a typical piece of German domestic history, a portrayal of German conditions around the year 1900. This, however, not in its descriptions but as a whole, the deciding factor being shifted into the central character and his spiritual transformation. The musician's life is only a helpful device, a pretext. I needed to find an intensely receptive membrane for every sound and overtone, an exceedingly delicate, accurate, quivering indicator that would show the exact condition of ordinary German life, the relationship between reality and the ideal, between the general and the particular. The book is provincial in the sense I have given to the word above. Perhaps I did not dream it so. But to pull down the confining wall about me would have brought me mortal hurts ; and as I worked I noted the curious fact that I could attain comparative breadth only if, instead of foolishly attacking the wall, I contented myself with the space granted me and, like a good archi-

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tect, used the existing limitations as a means for development.

True, much artificiality crept in, much that was vulgar, narrow, shrill, gaudy. But this, too, lay on my road, and the road brought me into that gracious region where his handiwork addresses man directly, touches him, serves him, commands him, not only by its manifest qualities but through that which is and must remain its mystery. Every product of organic growth is like this ; all that proceeds from nature is at once manifest and mysterious. Whether Daniel Nothafft can be taken as a genuine German figure has been widely discussed. The question is of interest only with regard to my personal problem. Some have answered it in the affirmative, some with doubtful consideration, some in the negative. I saw exhibitions of amazement, people growing perplexed in opinions they had always stubbornly upheld, because they could no longer see any connection between the author and the

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product. My formal attitude toward society and toward the German public remained practically unchanged. For this formal position can be infallibly regulated by only one thing, by one's own soul, by the recurrent, blood-generated, star-governed tidal wave of inner life.

In the meanwhile, in the course of a stay at Nuremberg, I had met again the friend from whom I had parted under such ugly circumstances in Zurich years before. He now stood in the middle forties, I at their beginning ; the storms of our youth lay far behind us, and because of the long time that had passed I could hardly feel that it was the same man. My memory of him had its independent existence, and the present had to come to terms with it. My old-time friend maintained a reserve that sometimes made me wonder and sometimes gave me silent amusement, for I had a general idea of its cause. The mentor and guide of one's developmental years cannot, from the day one withdraws from his influence, express satisfaction at the direction one

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has taken. Whatever one does, whatever one's demeanor, whatever one's aspirations and attainments—he has always had other plans, other wishes. To him everything seems error and betrayal, for he was not there, he did not give it his blessing; and it embitters him to know that he could be dispensed with. That he himself failed in the critical hour has been erased from his memory, must be erased. For who can bind himself to another for a decade and a half as an intellectual and spiritual debtor? That would destroy him. So he prefers to insist that at one time he was responsible for his comrade's weal and woe and that the day when his power and responsibility ceased to operate saw the dawn of the evil star. In his heart, too, he probably keeps an unpaid demand for gratitude, and though he is ashamed of it it adds to his resentment. Add to this that his own life has not reached the heights for which he had hoped, that he still must bear the old burdens, languish in the old chains, while his comrade-in-suffering of

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old has reached a goal, though in his own view that goal is false and detestable—and the situation grows as painful, as lacking in frankness, as the situation that obtained between us.

Similar encounters occurred frequently. I should like to interpolate an account of one of the most offensive of these occasions, when the demand for gratitude was brutally presented: At Fuerth one day I met a former schoolmate whose parents' home I had visited when I was fifteen or sixteen. I had been received in friendly fashion, though with a certain condescension which I then found justified, those people being well-to-do while I was poor. The young man, who enjoyed an ample allowance, had in the years of my Nuremberg struggles sometimes helped me out with a gold-piece. Knowing of my literary endeavors, he considered himself my patron; and to keep him in a good humor I would occasionally read some of my attempts to him. He was a friend of my Garrick's, who, when he left our city for England, had given

huge piles of my letters and manuscripts into his safekeeping. Twenty years later I met and recognized him in the street. I stopped him, greeted him and innocently inquired whether he still remembered those manuscripts and whether he still had them in his possession ; I wanted to look them over. Rarely have I seen such hatred, such sordid spite and offended arrogance united in one face. He replied : What ? You dare to demand the return of something I can claim as my own property after all I have done for you ? You dare to annoy a man about this trash after he lavished so many favors upon you, and about whom you have not concerned yourself for twenty-two years ? Such ingratitude cries to heaven ! With that he turned his back to me. This is no exaggeration ; he used just these words, and spoke of favors and ingratitude.

Between my friend and me something else trembled in the balance in addition to the cooled relationship of the past, which neither of us could warm or imbue with life, although we made every



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effort to make each other believe that nothing had changed. I was working in the municipal archives at that time ; in the afternoons we would arrange to make excursions into the suburbs. The peculiar thing was that my friend never said a word about any of my books, as if he had never read one or even heard of them. But I knew him well, his alertness, his actively seeking, ever suspicious, ever zealous interest in everything that went on in the intellectual sphere ; so that I knew, I could be certain he had avidly consumed every line of my writings on which he could lay his hand. Not with love, for he could not but regard me as one who had fled from schooling, his schooling, and hence was a failure ; but with his characteristic stubbornness he had to read me, precisely in order to find ever new evidence of the 'depth of my fall. That stood written on his brow.

Yet his silence seemed very strange to me, and in my oppressive, regretful meditation upon it I found a cause which, I had to avow, would in his

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eyes attach considerably more guilt to me than derived from the parting of our ways and my withdrawal from our common aims. This was the fact that in two of my novels there was a figure which, by a certain constellation of traits and habits, pointed to him as its model. I do not deny that I had thought of him as I depicted that person, and that the similarity—which, however, by no means constituted an identity—had not turned out to be exactly flattering for the living man. I had committed no breach of confidence ; I needed to reproach myself with neither betrayal nor censure, for there was nothing to betray or censure. Nor was there any question of shabby intentions, for into that character I had also put much of my own suffering, confusion and doubt ; and in those years of my search and longing for reality in my work this man, this friend, this foe, if you will, had stood before me as a brother-self. Foe and brother—how often the two stand together ! In that figure I had tried to portray something new which

had disturbed me to the point of dismay : The Jewish Christian, the German of indubitably pure blood who, however, because of a remarkable chemical constitution of fate or of his component elements, possesses qualities unmistakably Jewish, Jewish fervor, Jewish astuteness, Jewish instability, Jewish opportunism. Here is a pre-sensing and preforming of an inner and outer bond between the German and the Jewish, something which since then, indeed, has reached the surface of public discussion and to which I shall have to return.

It is a delicate question, that of how an author should conduct himself when he is confronted by the necessity of transposing into his world of fiction people with whom he associates or even those with whom he has come into but casual contact. In one's youth one proceeds rather thoughtlessly ; at least, I did. One simply does it ; if old ties break new ones are formed. One is proud of hesitating at nothing, not even at mischievous trespasses ; art, one supposes, justifies

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anything, even offenses against men—as if were possible. In my Bohemian years I had an affair of honor with an actor, a quite excellent fellow, whom I exposed to the laughter of the habitués of a literary café in a story, written without second thought, that described him as a ridiculous cuckold. It was a worthless piece of work, hardly excusable even as an exercise in writing. I recall that one day I received a most important letter from Gustaf af Geijerstam, in Sweden, who wrote that he was a ruined and lost man because Strindberg, in his *Schwarze Helden*, had drawn him, in a form every reader would recognize, as a vile and noxious influence on his country. He feared that knowledge of this had reached Germany too, and begged me to defend him. This proved infeasible for various reasons; nor could I see my way clear to interfering in that Swedish quarrel. For that matter, Geijerstam died shortly thereafter; of sorrow and chagrin, according to his friends.

Things seldom go so far. But where does the

limit lie? We know that Kestner too could not forget how Goethe laid bare that friendly family in his *Werther*. It is told that on the appearance of *Anna Karenina* the high social circles of Moscow and St. Petersburg paid less attention to the merits of the work than to its characters, whose prototypes they ferreted out and identified with malicious curiosity. What is admissible and permitted? What is forbidden, and what interdicts itself? Does the greater artist have the wider scope, a special privilege to be inconsiderate and cruel? Hardly, for in this connection we know of no sufficiently authoritative canon. I cannot dispense with reality and the material it provides if I do not want to sink, together with my creatures, into a fathomless bog. To avoid exaggeration of the hues of nature and arbitrary distortion of its truth requires more courage and energy than a romancing, falsely idealistic enhancing and generalization. An insufficient attachment to reality is to blame for the insipid tragedy, the excessive and groundless

heat, the formal climactic development which render the average German narrative so unenjoyable. On the other hand, it is not seemly to pillory lives and men merely because of their interesting or exceptional features. I may not seize or violate that which unquestionably belongs to another and which he wishes to preserve ; though I disguise or even exalt it, for him it becomes distorted and he must deem himself the poorer for it. Still, there are cases when the outer obligation must yield to a compelling inner duty ; but then it is no longer merely the interesting and the exceptional which is involved, but the genuine and pregnant, vision, transfiguration, renewal. Then the reproach of violence and betrayal becomes untenable ; if misunderstanding causes some odium to cling, time removes it. What happens with men has no permanence, men themselves are ephemeral ; only the poet can regulate destiny. But the products of those who plagiarize and ape reality are even more ephemeral than men and events.

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This raw, fortuitous reality—as a rule little can be done or achieved with it. It is a huge storehouse of material ; and of what use can it be if there is no eye to bring order into its confusion, to perceive the simplicity in its complexity, the noble metal in the slag, the true visage among the grimaces, the intimation of the whole in the patchwork, the order in the aberration ? The appearance belongs to me, in any case ; who can dispute my right to it ? Into what I transmute it is a matter of grace,

BUT I would detail a conversation with my friend. He inquired after my family and whether there had been a reconciliation ; he displayed a lively interest in my personal affairs. Although there was something constrained in his exclusive dwelling on such subjects I replied unhesitatingly. While I no longer was the starving scribbler who once had been a burden that he had thrown off, he nevertheless still had a certain power over me. For the power gained by a man of superior experience over a perplexed seeker can never be lost entirely unless one or the other of the two be lost himself. Moreover, I still had for this man an affection which he surely must have felt.

It seemed to me that he wanted to sound me on a certain point ; and finally he asked me out-



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right whether I was still a Jew by conviction, as I had been then. I replied : A Jew by conviction ? I did not know just what the qualifying words might mean. I was a Jew ; that told the whole story. I could not change it, and I did not wish to change it. Accordingly, he asked, I had decided on that direction ? And his keen gaze fell on me through his spectacles. I tried to explain that I had come to realize how unnecessary such a decision was for me. It was necessary only for those who had resolved upon a voluntary restriction of their scope of activity, and who contented themselves with this either out of the pride of the wrongfully misjudged or out of weariness and weakness ; and, on the other hand, for those who had burned their bridges behind them and who, with a conscience more or less clear, and a bearing more or less dignified, abandoned themselves to the process of adaptation and assimilation. I, however, had neither the desire nor any reason to choose one or the other of these courses. I had a mission in this

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world. I had already been given to feel that in this I was not mistaken, that as far as my consciousness of it was concerned I did not need to regard myself as the embodiment of a lie, so to speak. And it was in this sense, and none other, that I had to substantiate myself. In this sense I had to make my decision ; nor could I do it once and for all and then recline in comfort ; no, I had to decide anew every day, at every step, with every breath. I knew that with "reclining in comfort" I had overshot the mark ; but suddenly scales seemed to fall from before my eyes, so that I came to realize the meaning of those "decisions" that were compelled not by my own heart but by another, whose purposes differed from mine, who was overbearing and at variance with me. To crowd me out, to narrow my field, to force my withdrawal—that is his aim. He wants to circumscribe me ; against me he wants to set himself, his own opinions and concepts and forms.

My violence somewhat surprised my friend.

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Thoughtfully he replied that either I was assuming too much, even the impossible, or he would have to believe I was content to fill an office that amounted to a spiritual luxury. I did not understand him, and asked him to speak more plainly. He said : It is of no avail... What ? What is of no avail ?...He looked at me. The spirit that lies in us and the spirit that lies in you cannot mix, said he ; they never did and they never will. There is no flowering, nor any organism, but only a conglomerate. Cases of apparently successful fusion, as, for example, Felix Mendelssohn, yet remain superficial, lack true amalgamation ; he was a gifted hybrid still bearing vestiges of his origin, but he was favored by his time, when the invasion of the alien element was as yet inconsiderable and our ability to scent danger was only feebly developed. Then, and for another half century, art was more important than the man, and all art was proclaimed neutral ground ; to-day we scrutinize and weigh the man, and we

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know that the most seductive, most perfect art may sow poisonous and pestilential seeds.

Though I had heard all this before it seemed new, in a way. In one sense it was true, in another the dregs of unreasoning perversion. Very German it seemed to me, very narrow, very categorical, a philosophy and last judgment issued on his own authority. Instead of protesting I asked whether he knew any of my books, any one of them, even if only one ; I was sure he would understand that the question was not prompted by vanity. His expression grew oddly rigid. But I did not relent ; I importuned him as Jacob importuned the angel. Why did he hide it ? Had not my books shaken his tenet ? With the slightest knowledge of my work could he, as a man of honor, a man who could think and see and feel, still uphold that principle ? He was evasive. He seemed taken aback, ill at ease. Finally he said : Even if I could admit your point conditionally in your case, what would

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that prove ? I will admit it ; why not ? It has always been my view that you are an exception. I will admit that you have brought us Eastern currents, revealed Eastern visions ; that the German essence is in you, the essence of our essence —how I do not know, but it is there ; I will admit that here something like a fusion, a new synthesis, has taken place. But what does that establish ? It is only the exception that proves the rule.

Thereupon I replied, more fervently and emphatically, I think, than I had ever spoken to him : If it can be imagined it is possible. If the idea exists the phenomena itself will soon appear. If a single man has reached it it is attainable. It is only seemingly that I am an individual ; I represent all, I am the expression of a definite will inherent in the age, in the race, in fate. In me are all the others, the resistant, too ; I am clearing the road for all, I am sweeping away the lie for all, and the mere fact of my existence is the evidence you want. The exception

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does not prove the rule, but demolish  
There must always be a first drop to wear  
the rock.

I do not remember what he answered.  
parted soon after.

I HAD left Munich in the middle of 1898 and had made my home in Vienna. Now I could no longer stay there. As I have hinted, a woman had very nearly brought on my undoing, and had I not severed the pernicious bond with passionate resolution I would have been utterly destroyed. I had spent four years in the lurid flame of erotic slavery, unspeakably filled with it in unconditional self-surrender, but innerly ravished and defiled. My entire being was scorched and tainted by it, my moral life was in peril, my social existence was already tottering. Friends turned away from me, people who liked me excluded me from their homes, gossip and slander soiled my name ; so that finally my sole salvation lay in a breaking-off and flight.

Perhaps I would never have been able to rise

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and tear off my fetters had not a young girl, a seventeen-year-old Russian Jewess, entered my bewitched circle like a loving little Madonna ; to tell the truth, she was the first woman to bring me luck. By nothing more than her way of existing, smiling, understanding, her mutely generous, movingly sincere manner, she helped me surmount my difficulties and made me forget and persevere. She worked in a tobacco factory, lived in great poverty, but she might have been a young princess. She was proud as she was lovely, noble-minded as she was reserved by nature. We lost each other as quickly as we had come together.

Because of its lighter form, life in Austria and Vienna had a beneficial effect on me. Obstructions which at home I would have felt at every step were lifted here. People came to meet me more freely, more willingly, more candidly. True, it usually developed that they assumed no particular obligations with their friendly advances ; indeed, any demand for dependability



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they met with a naïvely regretful refusal to acknowledge or honor it, and if one had the notion of basing a confident hope on their words they fell into slyly innocent amazement. But everyday life there was free of baleful friction, and the tone used in ordinary association was more friendly, less carping. One merely had to know the rules ; girding oneself with experience, one had to refrain from coming forward with blunt claims. That can be learned. A rather pliant mind can learn it in Italy, too, where similar faults irritate the German's moral pride.

But these things go deeper, and the depths must be sounded. For I did not live for images and poetry alone ; my inmost consciousness demanded that I explore the soil in which these had their roots and the atmosphere in which they flourished. I was aware of the people behind whom stood the ideal figure, and their world penetrated with sufficient loudness into the isolation I had achieved through many a struggle. Today that Austrian world stands distinctly be-

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fore me in the light of my twenty years' experience there, half accepting, half repelling.

As one brought up as a German I was accustomed to feel the essence of Germany, the land and the people, as a whole, unquestionable, delightful in its rotundity and tangibility, impossible to misunderstand in any regard. Here, however, everything lay open to doubt : the country, the people, the government, the mode of life, nationality and society, tradition and defection from tradition, politics and art, organizations and individuals. The doubtful is tempting, particularly in its superficial aspects, and amateurs and casual observers have not neglected to enjoy it. But the ever more violent collision of different forces brought on catastrophe. Oppression legitimated by centuries, carrying on, under the cloak of peace-making and the adjusting of differences, a selfish policy in the interests of kings and a dynasty, could not fail to have its effect on public and private life. For many, many years the dully patient masses were the plaything and

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prey of a heartless governmental machine. For many, many years they were duped and deceived by a system with a gift for shrewdly assuming itself of all available forces, only to dispose of them at the proper time with a heedless shrug of the shoulders, disregarding of promises and pacts. For many, many years they served as the means whereby a powerful minority, in whose privilege they believed or were forced to believe, gained its ends. For many, many years they had no voice in matters of their intellectual and religious needs, until it became an ingrained habit to fulfill the greedy demands of the church, the court, the aristocracy, the great landowners. And this to such an extent that a favorable ending could be effected by no human agency, however wise.

In Germany the Austrian way of life was regarded with a certain indulgent disdain. Even a rake who came from Berlin to Vienna, every soldier-citizen who, grown presumptuous in his monotonous home, had sipped the sweet froth of the

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more Southern, more lively existence, felt himself competent to act as permanent critic of the country and its people. Every judgment was prejudgment. The elegant and attractive exterior of the metropolis, the inborn courtliness and hospitality of its inhabitants covered over the wounds and the abysmal depths. People did not see clearly ; they did not look below the surface or take matters seriously. Whether the question concerned a book or a picture, a doctrine or an art that had originated there : it was not taken seriously. Except in the case of music and dramatic art. In those fields was much that could not be denied, much incontestable mastery ; there lay merit and a deeply characteristic flowering, although at times their luxuriance and too light gaiety caused the more serious-minded German brother to grow suspicious where the nursing of suspicion was still permitted. In brief, objections, reservations and deductions were marked down on the great score-board. I too have experienced this. When I began to

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write my books in Austria I fell in the eyes of many of my German critics. Logically I could no longer be taken with entire seriousness. Even close friends jestingly warned me, and took it amiss that I had settled among the "Phæacians."

That the general situation as well as the nature of some individuals caused me to suffer deeply I shall not deny. Today, when the wreckage is clearly apparent, when the German part of the nation has been struck to the heart, when its forces are dissipated and its resources exhausted, every child knows what was going on. A presentiment of it oppressed me long before. For I saw that there was no center and no community. The cynically open avowal of self-realized inadequacy repelled me, as did the giddiness, the softness, the lifeless despotism, the want of discipline. Mischief remained unrecognized, or, if recognized, was passed over in silence. The politicians were hampered by party considerations, and a perverse joviality even

blunted the edge of their malice. The authors were, in the main, either dependent on others or else, if independent, almost exclusively in the service of sexuality, the theatre and exaggerated sociability, which might lead to debasing gossip and grinning treachery. No human activity found an echo, no loftier interest met with selfless approval. Whoever sought roads leading away from the trivial and popular became an outlaw, and every work meant to have deeper, broader results was aspersed or openly derided.

But the German should not have let himself be led astray by his knowledge of the shadows and vice so often and movingly confessed there. By his arrogance he destroyed before it had really been born something that surely had been meant to make him richer, fuller, more balanced. He might have inherited a flourishing estate ; what he will now at most receive has been looted. Incapable of arousing love anywhere, he failed here too. He disregards human hearts, clumsily steps on them as he ruthlessly inculcates commands.

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Austria—and here I am not considering the people—with her abundance of living landscapes, heroic and idyllic, delicate and powerful, charming and magnificent, with her softly transparent atmosphere, her brightness and her freshness, might well in many ways have a healing, rejuvenating, transfiguring effect on the German character ; a musicalizing effect I would say if the word be permitted. At least, the country healed and rejuvenated and transfigured me when, a broken man, I found a refuge there. I learned there—perhaps from its landscapes, perhaps from its air, perhaps also from some rare personalities whom I met there—the meaning of form, of discipline of the senses, of rhythm of line. Out there I had set up my columns ; now I could spring the arches.

As for the people, generally speaking—something of nature adheres to them in their good qualities as well as in their bad, the changeable mood of nature, its freedom and plasticity. A faint breath of the Orient floats about them.

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Sustained by ancient Germanic, Roman and Celtic elements, they have been subjected to a broadening and deepening of character by the proximity of the Slavic world, whose blood has sometimes mingled with their own. The traditions of the past still are fertile. Individuality has not yet been bred out of them, the archetype retains its meaning ; gestures and masks and lightness are still there, obscurity in development, mystery in intercommunication.



ONE circumstance puzzled me before I had been long in Vienna. In Germany I had associated with Jews scarcely at all ; only now and then did one appear in my circle, and no special stress was laid by either himself or others on the fact that he was Jewish. Here, however, it developed that all with whom I came into intellectual or friendly contact were Jews. And not only did others invariably emphasize this, but they emphasized it themselves. That forced me to take a defensive stand, for such exclusiveness limited my field of vision.

But I soon realized that all public life was dominated by Jews. The banks, the press, the theatre, literature, social organizations, all lay in the hands of Jews. The explanation was easy to find. The aristocracy would have nothing to

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do with such things ; with the exception of a few non-conformists who had been ejected from the fold, a few who saw things in a different light, they not only maintained a respectful distance from intellectual and artistic life but feared and contemned it. The small number of untitled patrician families imitated the aristocracy ; the original upper middle class had disappeared, leaving a gap now occupied by government functionaries, army officers and professors ; then came the closed circle of the lower middle class. The court, the lower middle class and the Jews gave the city its stamp. And that the Jews, as the most mobile group, kept all the others in continuous motion is, on the whole, not surprising. Yet I was amazed at the hosts of Jewish physicians, attorneys, clubmen, snobs, dandies, proletarians, actors, newspapermen and poets. From the very beginning my inner and outer relations with them were full of conflict. Truth to tell, among them I sometimes felt as if I were in exile. The German Jews among whom I had lived had

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accustomed me to more polished manners, a less conspicuous demeanor. Here I could never lose a certain sense of shame. I was ashamed of their conduct and of their bearing. To be ashamed of some one else is an uncommonly painful sensation ; most painful of all, of course, when a blood and racial kinship is involved, and when an unyielding inner decree as well as moral self-schooling demand that one bring some sort of defense of every utterance and every action of that other. True responsibility is like a pact signed in one's heart's blood. All the contentions of reason notwithstanding it remains binding, and volition and judgment are powerless against it.

This sense of shame sometimes was aggravated to the point of desperation or disgust. Things small or great might serve as provocation : the idiom ; quick familiarity ; mistrust that betrayed the ghetto left not far behind ; unshakable opinions ; idle meditation upon simple matters ; sophistical fencing with words where a seeing eye would have sufficed ; servility where pride would

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have been proper ; boastful self-assertion where modesty was in place ; lack of dignity, lack of restraint ; lack of metaphysical aptitude. This last it was which dismayed me the most, and most of all in the more cultured of them. Through all these Jews ran a quality of rationalism that cast a gloom over any more intimate relationship. Among the base it found base expression, in worship of success and wealth, in self-seeking and lust for gain, in greed for power and in social opportunism. Among the nobler it manifested itself in impotence in the ideal and intuitive realms. Science was set up as an idol, intellect as the sovereign lord. Whatever could not be calculated was relegated to a lower category ; even destiny became a matter of calculation, and the most obscure secret depths of the soul were subjected to minute analysis. Altogether they were determined and resolved upon stripping the world of its mysteries ; and in this they ventured so far that in many cases, to me at least, nothing remained to distinguish the explorer's ardor from

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shamelessness. I believe that what mankind gains on the one hand by disclosing new knowledge and forces is more than counterpoised by what it loses in desecration of its reticences and questioning humility. For truth lies in imagery and reverence alone.

Association revealed excellent, winning qualities in individuals, understanding and kindliness, readiness to help and serve, an eye for the rare and the precious. Warmth was theirs and the gift for grasping the unspoken, a nervous conforming to rhythm and often an impatient rushing ahead, when quickness of tempo masked want of intensity and depth. I came to know highly cultured Jews, refined to the point of fragility ; one might have believed that with these last weary offshoots the race had reached the end of its road. Then, again, types of an entirely different sort : Vigorous emissaries of a huge circle that still stood apart from European civilization but was pushing toward it threateningly, eagerly or antagonistically fascinated by it. Imbued with a

fierce resolution to hold their own, they came conquerors, gained territory by violence and unscrupulous competition quickly seized the sources offered by the state and society. Two years later their sons were publishing literature weeklies or poems in the most modern style, their daughters had acquired the art of mimicry to such a degree that in their bearing and manner of expression they were hardly to be distinguished from countesses of ancient family-tree. Yet beside these were men of an austere cast, solitary, silent, persistent delvers ; men of gaunt spirituality in whom the stern and somber religion of their fathers had begotten a stern and somber relationship to life itself. Devoid of sensualism, they denied the most beautiful attainment of nature in allegorical form, and—just like their fathers whose eyes, however, they were apostates—became the slaves and untiring advocates of a doctrine. They too were resolved to hold their course.

At the time of my coming to Vienna, Zionism was in process of birth. The constant in-

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from the North and East of the empire created among the Jews a mood and a physical constitution totally unfamiliar to me. News of the outrages committed by the Czarist government, the irrefragable evidence of oppression, murder, torture and violence, the debasing of the law and the sneering disregard of justice—all this, coupled with the wretched social situation of the Jews in the Slavic provinces of Austria, had gradually given rise to an extraordinary unrest ; and a few men of courage and determination dedicated themselves to the plan of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. The effect was tremendous. The plan of settlement was not propagated as such, but as a political project received international significance, and a messianic aspect because of its religious background ; and this brought it countless adherents. At that time I heard of Jews who, living their tormented lives somewhere in Podolia or Bukovina, burst into tears when tidings of their new hope reached them. I heard of Jews who made pilgrimages

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requiring days or even weeks merely in order to see the man, the prophet they had longed for, and, as they put it, to kiss the hem of the robe of him who had given them the possibility of this blessed deliverance. For centuries they had lived under a frozen sky, and their world had been a prison-house.

My personal attitude toward this movement was uncertain, sometimes painfully so. To begin with, my outlook had to assume an entirely new direction, for the conditions familiar to me were totally different. Some of its champions told me that I would have to waken and that some day I would be awakened to the truth and to action. They did not know me. Furthermore, it had happened that I had come into social contact with the author of the idea, and that I could neither regard him sympathetically as a writer or as a man, nor believe in his unique greatness as he assumed and demanded. I cannot refrain from mentioning this, for I have often thought of it and found in it cause for self-



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reproach. Persistent refusal to recognize the significant qualities of a man bespeaks not only blindness but self-delusion. I was obstinate and doubtless unwilling. The sight at close quarters of minor frailties and vanities annoyed me ; I was unable, because not meant, to be his follower. Because the man seemed transparent to me his achievement became invisible—a culpable confusion of ideas that gave rise to much aberration and fallacy.

That Jews repeatedly demanded that I join them in this vital Jewish cause is easily understood. Such demands always embarrassed me. I was prepared to recognize the efforts they gave to it, their sacrifices and devotion, even to share their hopes ; but my position was not theirs. I did not feel the solidarity which they considered obligatory upon me merely because I was a Jew. Not only the religious, but the national ties as well were lacking ; and so, in my still obscure resistance, I could not, for the time being, see Zionism as anything more than an economic-

philanthropic enterprise. Frankly speaking, I recoiled from what they called the Jewish nation, for it seemed to me that a nation could not be created by the conscious efforts of men. The ideal nation surviving in the Jewish diaspora appeared to me finer, nobler, more fruitful than any reality. What would be gained, said I, if in this century of nationalistic madness the two dozen existing little nations—ever wrangling, jealous of one another, slaughtering one another—were, by the addition of the Jewish nation, to become two dozen plus one? From the historic and philosophic point of view I probably was right; but that phenomenon, born of necessity, constantly showed me to be in the wrong. And it is necessity which leads the way.

The conflict persisted. It was the people themselves who were concerned, their faces and their natures, their actions and their words; the question, ultimately, of whether they were in me and I in them. I could respect and esteem and love a man simply because he was what he was,

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and for this reason worthy of respect and esteem and love. But I could not give respect and esteem and love to a group, an aggregate, merely because I was included in the community. Perhaps others can ; but God did not give me that power. To the demand that I love the group, the aggregate, the people for the sake of the ideal, I reply : I was born to an unswerving ideal that permeates my whole being, dictates all my doings. To supplant it by another or to place another on the same plane is impossible, humanly, spiritually, organically impossible ; else truth and thoughtfulness no longer retain importance, but only experiment and chance and makeshift. Whatever one is and does one must be and do wholly ; else any one could attend to the affairs of any other.

When I saw a Polish or Galician Jew I would speak to him, try to peer into his soul, to learn how he thought and lived. And I might be moved or amazed, or filled with pity and sadness ; but I could feel no sense of brotherhood

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or even of kinship. He was totally alien to me, alien in every utterance, every breath, and when he failed to arouse my sympathy for him as an individual human being he even repelled me. Many Jews who feel as Jews refuse to admit this to themselves. Because of a concept of duty or the demand of a party, or in order to avoid exposure to hostile attacks, they keep their feelings in check. But in my case this would be to no purpose. I do not solicit imitation, nor claim that what I did, how I conducted myself, was proper; I am simply describing my experience and my struggle. A few years ago I spoke with a Jewish nationalist of my acquaintance, a man of great nobility and excellence, about this matter which oppressed me and perplexed others. I said: Does not our dissension derive from the fact that you are a Jewish Jew while I am a German Jew? Are these not two distinct species, almost two distinct races, or at least two distinct modes of life and thought? Am I not more perilously exposed than most, since I yield in no

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direction, consent to no compromise, but merely, standing in an outpost, desire to give expression to, and bridge the gap with, myself and my world? And in this way am I not ultimately more useful than one who has bound himself to follow a certain line of march?

He did not enter into a discussion, but replied with a smile: You really must not let all this disturb you. You are a poet, and as such enjoy a special license. I remember that this rejoinder hurt me painfully, for despite its cordial friendliness it had an element of evasive derogation, as if he had meant to say: We do not need you, and can well dispense with you.

IF some one were to inquire among what people I had found the greatest understanding, encouragement, response and support, I would have to say : Among Jewish men and women.

If the same question were put to any writer or artist of non-Jewish origin the answer would, in the majority of cases, be the same. I have investigated the matter, approaching with this query many who occupied high positions ; and my surmise, which had already been a half certainty, met with confirmation every time. That confirmation may also be found by examining the careers of the men who embodied the regenerative and creative forces of the nineteenth century ; it may be found in letters, in casual, sometimes very much veiled comments, in the first fresh judgment of their contemporaries, in the shapers

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and carriers of public opinion. Jews were their discoverers and their receptive audience, Jews proclaimed them and became their biographers, Jews have been and still are the sustaining pillars of almost every great name.

In my own case a very peculiar difficulty makes its appearance. The cultured Jew finds it hard to believe in the creative gifts of another Jew. And as the degree of culture diminishes this attitude becomes an undisguised cynical skepticism. Probably it is atavistic in origin, born of an ancient memory of familiarity due to the inseparability of the individual from the group ; a sense of being chained together, of being condemned to remain together. It expresses : I know you, you cannot beguile me, I know those sleights as well as you ; it is like one conjurer encountering another. Yet I can also perceive here a deep-seated democracy that seems to go back thousands of years to the natural equality obtaining among nomad tribes, where none can rise above his neighbor. The Jews always confront their

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great men with an unspoken commandment :  
Thou shalt not rise above us, for in the eyes of  
God we are all equal.

Among Jews the constructive, image-forming element has never had an opportunity for free development ; true creative talent is comparatively very rare. Some deny its existence altogether, conceding the validity of no instance even though the definition of what is creative is previously agreed upon. But the yearning for the creative element is more deeply inherent in the Jew than in any other race of men. It is yearning for the creator : The Jewish consciousness of God, the fear of God, so to speak, explains it ; a study should be made of how and to what extent fear and yearning are coupled or yearning involves fear.

I have seen yearning manifest itself in many different and intermediate forms, often cloaked and masked ; often ludicrous and bizarre ; often false and self-degrading. I know and have known many who languished with yearning for



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the blond and blue-eyed individual. They knelt before him, burned incense before him, believed his every word, saw every twitch of his eyelids as heroic; and when he spoke of his earth, when he magnificently beat his Aryan breast they broke into a hysterical shout of triumph.

They do not want to be themselves ; they want to be that other. Once they have chosen him, it seems to them, they too are of the chosen, or at least the blot upon them is forgotten, their inferiority is covered over. Until recently, rarely though I attend the theatre, I have seen them in every theatre lobby, in every concert hall. I do not know whether they still congregate there.

Much amusement was provided me by a young Viennese Jew, elegant, very mildly ambitious, somewhat melancholy, something of an artist, something of a charlatan. Providence had given him blond hair and blue eyes ; but lo, he had no faith in his blondness and blue-eyedness. In his heart of hearts he felt that they were spurious. And, living in constant terror lest others too

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might doubt their genuineness, he went a step further than even the German ideal demanded and became an Anglo-maniac, and that most unbendingly.

But what have the masks to do with the essence? Without the devotion and infallible enthusiasm of the modern Jew art would have been but sorrily understood and received in the last fifty years. This was stressed again and again by Nietzsche himself, to whom *Antisemiterei*, as he called it, was a horror and an abomination; nay, more—an indignity. Jews were always ready; Jews had ears that heard and eyes that saw; theirs was the power to disclose mysteries, grasp the miraculous and recognize the unknown. Often enough their active zeal forced the public mind to take notice; and I have known such Jews who then were overcome with emotion, as if until the hour of their election to their beatific mission they had been only empty vessels, and now were scarce able to bear and contain their new fullness.

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I found this particularly true of women. Jewish women and girls constitute the noblest, most blessed element of Jewry ; in their crystalline purity they are incomparable. A few of them came to me too, to help and sometimes to save ; they were the first to confirm me, the first to still my gnawing doubts, the first to reply to my call, to corroborate my inner world.

Very clearly I can still see the woman who came to me after the appearance of *Die Juden von Zirndorf* ; a stranger, she came in winged haste, as if she had an urgent message to deliver, a message, as it were, from many who remained unnamed. Through her my solitude was suddenly joyfully filled by those unnamed souls, and the fantastic incredibility which every work has for its author yielded to valid existence. It is not a question of approval and confirmation, nor, surely, of applause and admiration ; it is the test of life that here takes place. And in this such forerunners play a decisive rôle. Later I found her hard to satisfy. She was stubborn, de-

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ended much from me, always wanted the emotional, the ultimate; she compared and utilized and weighed, set models before me and angrily disowned abortive attempts. Moreover, I must smile as I remember that this particular woman had amazingly fair hair and blue eyes.

Then I see the image of another, an ecstatic creature of infinite spiritual grace and extraordinary wit. To her a fictitious character was so real that she could quarrel with it, suffer because of it; terrifying was her challenging, fiery entry into a sphere which for most people is no more than a painted curtain. Such things make one feel that one is literally taken over. To speak of understanding would be to use a washed-out term, for what happens here is that rarest phenomenon of all, a visible transformation.

Others, again, were able to discard their own selves entirely. Renunciation, even asceticism comes into play here; no image, no perceptual illusion alone can bring matters to such a point.

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Involved also, beyond doubt, are attributes of blood and soul which the Western races do not possess, a psychic quality enriched and ennobled by the determination to choose and to surrender only after the choice has been made.

AT times, however, I fear that the peak of this development has been passed. These are the signs : I see drunken profligacy where a pure flame once burned ; inspiration and impulse have given way to practice of the vogue, intimate familiarity to dearth. They make their claims long before anything is given them ; they hand down dictatorial appraisements born of the caprice of dilettantes, they are immersed in stifling abundance, and the most precious things are just good enough to use for decoration and titillation.

The receptive passion has been appeased in the course of two or three generations ; now their senses have grown languid and respond only to the most powerful stimulus. The result is the appearance everywhere of a misguided and wanton tendency to produce works of their own.

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Every *nouveau riche* Jewish family today contributes one of its members to the ranks of artistic youth, as an author or painter, composer or conductor ; truly a nuisance.

No longer willing to be the vessel, they want to be the fount. But we must remember that when the vessel wants to become the fount the parched lips that cling to it must perish of thirst.

It is a nuisance because it signifies withdrawal from human obligations and a palliating of an incapacity for life that they instinctively feel. But it is something worse too : a failure to husband reserves of strength. The maternal, nurturing elements yield to the infantile, which consume—a symptom that dismays the observer not only in the life of the Jews but has its connection with the general malady of our age, the shriveling of the heart accompanied by hypertrophy of the intellect. The extent to which Jewry has a share in this, the degree of its responsibility, has for me long been a subject of most painful meditation.

THERE are meetings which at first seem unimportant and devoid of deeper connotation, but which grow in retrospection until they emanate a magic significance.

I recall a night, before the war, in a Hamburg café. A young Russian Jew takes a place at my table, and after a short while we are conversing. His father died in prison, his brothers are in Siberia, his sister was killed in a pogrom. Himself he is destitute, homeless, a fugitive. If the police should please he could be arrested the next day and sent back. At that time the German authorities were always eager to accommodate Russia in such affairs.

The manner of his recital is unusually cool. His face is white, almost unmoving, his forehead narrow and high, his eyes dully black, their fire



carefully repressed ; the face of a monk. His talk is masterly, every sentence polished ; even incidental remarks he makes in the tone of one immutably resolved to carry through his cause, regarding which, however, silence is obligatory upon him. Hence he receives every contradiction with a smile half inattentive, half surprised. It is a diplomatic procedure, bespeaking much caution and a deep background, but with a steady, profound, persistent mindfulness withal. All passion has been stifled ; it has been replaced by an icy fanaticism, scorching in its iciness. Thus, as a fanatic, consciously, inexorably, coldly, ardently he makes use of the doctrine that supports and vindicates him. Three qualities amaze me : his acumen, his knowledge, and his serenity. Although he seems to me rootless, as abandoned as only he can be who himself abandons the world and humanity, I sense, and feel more certain with every second : he is the high explosive, he is the man of the catastrophic hour.

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His experience—prodigious, taken individually as well as symbolically ; his manner of accepting it, sublimating it, making of it a spiritual motive force—prodigious. The outrage of the ages is unmasked and justice bows her head. Yet why did that austere masculine face become a Gorgon's head in my eyes ? Was it because of the terrible presumption of the individual who set himself up as the judge of all humanity ? Surely something of that was involved. I could easily have heard from his soul the ancient cry of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. I would have preferred to hear it ; it would have enabled me to assume dementia, a frenzy of the blood. Would I rather have seen him resigned, humanely sentimental, philosophically pondering ? Not at all.

His keen logic and the scientific basis of his will to destroy laid bare the gulf between us. Not only did he intend to force retribution from fate, but he hurled his challenge in the face of society also in the name of those who still brooded

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unaroused over their suffering, and even in the name of those whom suffering had not yet marked. With that he assumed arbitership over them too.

It is contrary to the divine ideal for an individual to claim the deciding voice in the matter of crime and punishment. With this belief I stand and fall. Though he rave, though he destroy everything about him, though with a flaming torch in his hand he become as a demon accursed—with his passion, and because of it, he yet submits to the divine ideal, or so it seems to me, for he remains within the circle of mankind. But when he appears with a self-assumed judicial title and by virtue of his self-exalted sovereign spirit wants to arrest and adjust the scales that with their century-old burden rise and fall incessantly between heaven and hell, then he is only the arch-enemy of the human race, he whom God has cast out.

Does he wish this? Will he undertake it? I think the idea holds no terrors for him. He

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has considered all possible consequences, is aware of them all. That is the purpose of his logic and knowledge.

Why was it Judaism, venerable, resting on sacred traditions, that furnished the breeding-ground for political radicalism? Was the crushing pressure the cause? Did the tension between yearning and its fulfilment grow so unendurable that the dams burst? Was Jewish tradition only the thesis, which produced the antithesis? Was the cultural progress of certain groups too suddenly swift, so that they lost their footing? Is it avidity for power? Is it an uprising of slaves? Is it apostleship, the impulse to martyrdom, or stratocratic craving?

Questions upon questions, none of which I am able to answer.

Instances of such exclusiveness of purpose and 'dynamic power as the one I encountered in Hamburg are, of course, rare. But their rarity does not diminish the danger; on the contrary, it makes the menace all the greater. These are

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magnets with an irresistible attractive force for loose chips. Within them dwells such transmissive energy, such power to inflame, to disorganize and disintegrate, to blaze abroad, to break the will of the weaker, to command adherence, that none can resist them unless his roots are firmly planted in the earth.

Without any effort they can gain the dissatisfied, the deniers, the debilitated and the decadent, the surfeited, the disappointed, the born traitors and those who find treason useful, the godless and the seekers after God, those who cling to words and those who believe in words, dilettante reformers of the world, adventurers, procurers, the pirates of public life and politics and literature; all those who fritter away their lives in unsubstantial opposition—legions. They gain men ruined by poverty as well as fugitives from miasmal luxury, and the youth, who have neither ideal nor star, but confused and quivering hearts—legions. All these, perhaps, were once a phase of creation; now each is a living phrase.

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The procedure runs as follows : In order to rule the intellect needs sentiment. But sentiment destroys reason, breaks the image, strips the form of its flesh until it becomes a skeleton, a phantom. He who is swayed by sentiment no longer can see the form and becomes detached from life and growth.

The intellect gives birth to the phrase. What has brought mankind to the point where it now stands if not phrases ? Phrases are like the inflamed cell that eats its way through the tissues, finally to become a malignant canker that kills the body. They swell and grow inflated and eat their way through everything and darken the earth and the air above the earth.

THESE circumstances, in conjunction with those touched upon above, brought about and fanned the conflagration of hate the scene of which Germany is today.

Not to the surprise of any one who was accustomed to watching the compass, who sometimes looked into the faces of the helmsmen. It was no surprise to me.

A historian of anti-Semitism would necessarily relate an important section of German cultural history.

It would be interesting to examine the tempting bait which now and then was hurled on the street out of ministerial chambers or the haunts where the Junkers brewed opinion, bait which the passerby, too hungry for squeamishness, eagerly consumed.

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It would be interesting to disclose the complicated, calamity-bringing anti-Semitic machinations by means of which, in the seventies and eighties, the sworn Wagnerians, in a curious, spell-bound state of mysterious unrest, succeeded in explaining away to the German world the incongruity between Wagner the expression of the German spirit and Wagner the musician. For there seethed the largest of the witches' cauldrons.

But that is not my office.

The unfortunate fact is that the Jew today is outlawed. If not in the juridical sense, at least in the popular mind.

The unfortunate fact is that one cannot dispute the reasons given by the baiters, prompted agents and volunteers alike. Every iconoclastic incident, every convulsion, every social challenge has seen, and still sees, Jews in the front line. Wherever a peremptory demand or a clean sweep is made, wherever the idea of governmental metamorphosis is to be translated into action with



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frenzied zeal, Jews have been and still are the leaders.

Jews are the Jacobins of our age.

True, if fairness were to be expected it would have to be conceded that these Jews, almost without exception, were inspired by honest conviction, that, Utopian idealists, they felt they were bringing salvation to the world. It would have to be conceded that in their activity lies a consistency which, though it may perhaps be absurd and criminal, may, on the other hand, be prophetic of the distant future: the transplanting from the religious into the social field of the messianic ideal derived from Judaism. It would, further, have to be conceded that they would not be revealed as the culprits if it were rigidly investigated who profited from the confusion, who feathered his nest, who fanned the flame as long as he could do it without observation or danger and then managed to hide when the good old police intervened. It would have to be conceded that it was they who pulled the chestnuts out of the

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fire, and that now, when the chestnuts apparently are burned, it is decided to chop off their hands for it.

It would also have to be conceded that Jews are equally often the preservers and guardians of tradition, thoroughly versed in the law and observant of its commandments.

But fairness cannot be expected. Nor is fairness their design. Their design is hate, and hate smoulders on. It makes no distinctions as to persons or achievements, it inquires after no meaning or aim. It constitutes its own meaning and aim.

It is German hate.

An aristocratic Dane once asked me : What is the reason for the German hatred of Jews ? In my country the Jews are almost universally loved. They are known as the most reliable of patriots ; they are known to lead honorable private lives ; they are respected as a sort of nobility. What do the Germans want ?

I should have answered : Hate.

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I should have answered : They want a scapegoat. Whenever they are badly off, after every defeat, in every difficulty, in every trying situation they shift the responsibility for their distress upon the Jews. So it has been for centuries. Threatening embitterment of the masses has always been diverted into this convenient channel. Even the Rhenish electors and archbishops knew that when their military exploits had failed and their treasure vaults were exhausted they needed only to institute massacres of Jews to provide their people with certainly acceptable entertainment.

But what I did say was : A non-German cannot possibly imagine the heartbreaking position of the German Jew. German Jew—you must place full emphasis on both words. You must understand them as the final product of a lengthy evolutionary process. His twofold love and his struggle on two fronts drive him close to the brink of despair. The German and the Jew : I once dreamt an allegorical dream, but am not sure that

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I can make it clear. I placed the surfaces of two mirrors together ; and I felt as if the human images contained and preserved in the two mirrors would have to fight one another tooth and nail.

The Dane simply replied : I believe the Germans are not sufficiently liberal, at least since the founding of the empire.

Probably that is true ; but it is the mildest thing that can be said on the subject. Imagination and freedom and goodness of heart also are lacking. A vital defect must lie in a people if it can—so lightly, so habitually, so unscrupulously, heeding no appeal, admitting no sincere discussion, capable of no generosity on this point, a people that incessantly proclaims itself the leader of all nations in culture, art, research and idealism—continually practise such injustice, sow such dissension, heap up such mountains of hate.

Let me endeavor to interpret my metaphor of the mirrors.

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That a similarity of destiny and character exists here is self-evident. Here as there centuries of dismemberment and decentralization. A foreign yoke and a messianic hope for victory over all foes, for unification. For this purpose, indeed, a special German God was devised, and figured in every patriotic hymn as the Jewish God figures in prayers. Here as there misunderstood abroad, objects of ill will, jealousy and suspicion ; here as there a heterogeneous configuration within the nation, dissension among the tribes. Incongruously contrasting individual traits : practical activity and dreaminess ; the gift of speculation in both the higher and the lower senses ; the impulse to economize, to accumulate, to trade, to learn, the impulse to acquire knowledge and serve it. An overabundance of formulas and a dearth of form. A detached spiritual life that imperceptibly leads to hybridism, to insolence and intractable stubbornness. Here as there, finally, the dogma of election.

Contact brought on abrasions, the abrasions

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became bleeding, festering wounds. In the weaker body, wounds that will never heal.

With what do the Germans charge the Jews? They say: You poison our pure atmosphere. You lure our innocent youth to copy your tactics and practises. Into our bright Germanic *Weltanschauung* you bring your gloomy meditation, your negation, your doubts, your Asiatic sensuousness. You want to enchain our spirit and eradicate the Aryan principle from the face of the earth.

My answer to this is all I have said so far. Whoever still upholds those accusations could not be convinced though I spoke with the voice of an angel.

Others say: You ruin our business. And these are honest. The Germans may remember how at the beginning of the war, furious at the hypocrisy, they had to endure the outbursts of moral indignation in which the English indulged. But when some Englishman told them: You are ruining our business—then they could under-

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stand, although that indictment, when directed against an entire nation in order to sanction a war, is stupid and inhumane.

A young friend told me the following story : In Poland he was billeted in the house of a poor Jew who had three sons, eleven, thirteen and fifteen years of age. One day, in the course of a talk with them, he asked each what he wanted to become. Eagerly the eleven-year-old cried : I want to become a great man, a millionaire. The second replied seriously : I want to be a Jew. The third, who stood somberly aside and for a time pretended not to hear the repeated query, at last said to the insistent questioner : I want to become dust, like you.

These three instances represent the three categories of the Jew as a human being. The queer and painful thing is that the Germans always, since of old, have seen only the one, the first ; that they speak of it alone and direct their wrath against it alone, whatever other excuses or pretexts they may bring forward.

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They like to point to Christianity—as if that were Christianity!—and to use Christianity as an excuse for what they do contrary to all humane practise. I will put up with racial theories and philosophic systems, even with the evidence, unearthed by some zealot of hate, that Christ was of non-Semitic descent; the superficial-minded may be dazzled by this, and the rabble deluded. But to me Christianity does not seem appropriate for their purposes. For it is the nobler Jews, those least heard from, scattered here and there throughout the land, in whom the Christian ideal and the Christian mode of life find their purest expression; a pregnant transitional phenomenon.



WITH the realization of the hopelessness of all efforts the bitterness in one's breast becomes a mortal agony.

Vain to adjure the nation of poets and thinkers in the name of its poets and thinkers. Every prejudice one thinks disposed of breeds a thousand others, as carrion breeds maggots.

Vain to present the right cheek after the left has been struck. It does not move them to the slightest thoughtfulness, it neither touches nor disarms them : They strike the right cheek too.

Vain to interject words of reason into their crazy shrieking. They say : He dares to open his mouth ? Gag him.

Vain to act in exemplary fashion. They say : We know nothing, we have seen nothing, we have heard nothing.

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Vain to seek obscurity. They say : The coward ! He is creeping into hiding, driven by his evil conscience.

Vain to go among them and offer them one's hand. They say : Why does he take such liberties, with his Jewish obtrusiveness ?

Vain to keep faith with them, as a comrade-in-arms or a fellow citizen. They say : He is Proteus, he can assume any shape or form.

Vain to help them strip off the chains of slavery. They say : No doubt he found it profitable.

Vain to counteract the poison. They brew fresh venom.

Vain to live for them and die for them. They say : He is a Jew.

In the despondent days of my Munich struggle I had the curious habit of going to the churchyard every morning and looking at the bodies laid out in the mortuary chamber. I never wearied of seeing them. Those wax-like foreheads, eyes and lips spoke to me. It seemed to me as if in fact they were all victims of murder,

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all somehow murdered by misunderstanding and unnecessary suffering. At times they would wake for me in some mysterious fashion and people my dreams. When I could not find my way the confusion that beclouded my mind would thrust me toward them, and with them I would lodge my complaints against the living.

I often feel like that today. I feel as if only the dead were capable of justice toward the living. For what the living do is more than flesh and blood can bear.

BUT this constant harping on "the Germans" has an element of absurdity too. I know enough of German life to realize what lies on the surface and what in the depths ; what goes on in the street and what in the silent soul of the nation itself. What is more, I know enough Germans to be well aware of the object of the disapproval and secret disgust of the finest among them. I know that here and there I have friends and comrades ; proud solitary figures ; brave swimmers who fight against the current ; artists, scholars, aristocrats, merchants ; men to whom I am bound by a common goal and common wishes, and men who simply give me their affection ; unknown persons from whom I receive an occasional greeting, but on whom I can count none the less ; and far away, on the periphery of the circle, stand

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many whose presence I can feel only through the electric waves that come to me, transmitting the gravity of their gaze and nature, their perseverance in productive labor, the indestructible influence of wise and great thoughts, luminous and profound works.

These, to my mind, are "the Germans." They are the Germans among whom I count myself, with whom I take my stand.

They know this, and consider it natural and normal. But if I come to one of them, even the most noble and tried friend, with my torment and my bitterness, my inextricably complex problem, my tokens and my questioning and my trouble, he cannot grasp the full scope of my misfortune and aggravates my helplessness with arguments that no longer carry weight with me. He thinks he can console me by speaking of the ebb and tide of spiritual pestilence ; he forgets that it is precisely in this field that I consider myself the physician and that I cannot but ascribe the unsuccessfulness of my efforts to a deficiency in-

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herent in me. He says that the madness of noisy shadow-tilters cannot be taken as evidence of the nation's state of heart and moral trend. But he forgets how large is the number of the victims ; he forgets the eloquence of terrible facts ; and he forgets that it is poor consolation for one imprisoned in a room full of coal gas to be told that tomorrow the windows will be opened. Ultimately, therefore, even he fails to understand that at bottom I feel more sorrow for the Germans than for the Jews.

Does not one feel the greatest sorrow for those one loves most deeply, though that love be entirely unrequited ?

And, thoroughly alive to the need for a change, he may ask, though half-heartedly : What can be done ? What must Germany do ?

I cannot answer him, for the answer is too obvious, and I am filled with shame for him.

When I see a driver abusing his weary horse so mercilessly with his whip that the beast's veins burst and its nerves quiver, and one of the

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passive if compassionate bystanders asks me : What can be done ?—I must tell him : First take the whip away from that savage.

If some one then rejoins : The nag is stubborn and malicious, the nag only wants to attract attention, the nag is well-fed, and the wagon is loaded with nothing but straw—then I must tell him : All that can be investigated later. First take the whip away from that savage.

More Germany surely could not do, I believe. But it would be much. It would be enough.

BUT what can the Jews do ? That question is more difficult to answer. In its inexhaustibility the subject laughs every effort to scorn.

Sacrifice is not enough. Friendly advances are misconstrued. A conciliatory attitude meets with coldness, if not with jeers. Apostasy is automatically excluded for any one with self-respect. Secret assimilation is effective only for those fit for assimilation, that is, the weakest individuals. Rigid adherence to the ancient form involves petrification.

What remains ? Self-destruction ? A clouded, oppressive, joyless life, perhaps possible for those who look for mere existence and its external embroideries, but inconceivable for men of intellect and soul, who now can choose only between infinite loneliness and hopeless struggle . . . ?



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It is better not to think of it.

But perhaps there is a future. Perhaps a possibility of hope remains. Perhaps there is a savior, man or spirit, here or there or on the bridge between. Perhaps he has already sent out his heralds. Perhaps I may regard myself as one of them.

At the close of the fifth decade of my life I stand surrounded by a circle of figures, and they try to assure me that what I have done was not done in vain. I am a German and I am a Jew, one as much and as fully as the other, both simultaneously and irrevocably. I feel that in a certain sense this is new ; probably because of my perfect consciousness of it and because I am so completely permeated with elements from both spheres, the Oriental and the Occidental, the ancestral and the freely chosen, the innate and those absorbed from the earth. In former years this new feature often disturbed me, doubtless because I was unable to understand it. For it was not born of my will ; its source lay in my

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nature and my development. It was disturbing, too, because on both sides I constantly encountered arms that supported or repelled me, voices that called a welcome or a warning. I am not a man to render regular accountings. Though I have always been attached to the individuals about me, and even in their power, I can do only what the inner impulse commands me to do. And since I have gradually learned to be sure that it urged me on in the right direction, I have gained some measure of peace of mind.

In my field of endeavor everything depends on one's ability to touch the hearts of men, to stir them and elevate them. Not that I stand on a height and, godlike, raise up lost souls. Nothing of the sort. He who touches and stirs hearts is raised up together with them, because of love. That is why I believe that renunciation of ignoble things will cause the ravings and frothings of hatred and injustice to grow powerless and their misdeeds to find expiation.

## TWELVE YEARS LATER

AN author who can look back upon more than forty years of work, who has produced more than a score of volumes, naturally—since men of letters are, in a way, intellectual conquerors—has absorbed the world about him in manifold shapes and figures, to reproduce it in new and unified shape and form, as a priest might do, for himself and for those whom he addresses. The process is comparable with a chemical reaction. In some cases, indeed, it corresponds to the transmutation of an element. When, for example, one compares a landscape by Stifter with the scene that served as its model, one is struck primarily by the heightening or exaltation, the purification that has taken place. This not in the sense of cheap idealization or romanticizing ; I mean a purging away of inessentials, of the

formless dross of actuality—a transformation fundamental for all art. We cannot get reality into our grasp. It must be clipped and pruned and kneaded, it must be moulded into new shapes, and the furnace in which it is moulded is the imagination. In former times this process depended upon esthetic considerations and rigid traditions that today have been lost or abandoned. In their place we now have something like biological necessity, the knowledge of the close relationship on the one hand, and of the profound difference on the other, between man's views and mode of life and occurrences in nature, the mutability of nature and the variations in its basic forms. And every writer is the product of his time and sees with the eyes of his time, at least superficially, even though he has, behind his physical eyes, another pair, whose vision extends above and beyond time.

First impressions are ineradicable. Born into a German landscape of specific character, I felt in my youth that it represented the prototype

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of all landscapes. It had nothing of the picturesque, no sweetness or charm ; but its harsh severity did not fail to have an educational effect. We know that shabby surroundings often stimulate the imagination ; that is why so few artists of international standing have emerged from the upper classes. In this sense shabbiness excites suspense and yearnings, spurs on that will to change which is the innermost mystery of all artistic endeavor. But shabbiness must not be confused with simplicity. A scene subdued in color is not necessarily monotonous ; on the contrary, it accustoms the mind to a certain faithfulness of perception and forces it to counterbalance the lack of external beauty with inner concentration, with a change, a deepening or abstraction, of the field of vision.

One's knowledge of home is hard to formulate in words. Undeniably it resembles one's knowledge of one's mother. One absorbs it not only through the senses and the atmosphere, but in a mystical and metaphysical manner also. One

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is not simply born by chance in such and such a city, on such and such a river, in such and such a landscape ; birth is no independent physiological act, if I may use the term. History, the general form of life, the course of the generations, a complex embracing thousands of years, have contributed to the creation of the individual, so that he is subject to entirely undeterminable influences which find expression in the landscape as in a crystal that is the product of unfathomable combinations and the laws governing them.

Thus Nuremberg—the city itself and its historical significance—had a decisive influence upon me and my development. A child cannot, of course, understand or estimate the meaning of a Gothic cathedral, of a figure by Veit Stoss, of a picture by Dürer ; even the faintest notion of it hardly reaches him. But he can see and grasp the legendary element in it ; the legendary will always be the first foundation of reality. The transition to history is nothing more than forced

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habituation to facts. But no fact, no event and no catastrophe can alter the structure of that root which goes down into the dark, infinite depths of the ages.

When, as children, we played in the market-place, when we were told the tale of the *Schöne Brunnen*, when we ran about in the dark, narrow little streets, under the broadly arched gateways, in dismal old lofts, on the stone bridges and in the half-ruined ancient towers, then all this was history which we ourselves had lived through ; temporal change had not yet reached our consciousness ; that is to say, the centuries were yet nameless, the image unconnected with formal knowledge. And the image has remained ineradicable in me, though gradually it became sublimated into a frame of mind whose solid essence may be found in my *Juden von Zirndorf*, *Gänsemännchen* and *Caspar Hauser*.

To this urban scene I owe something else also, which I am particularly anxious to mention because it led to a study that often is underrated

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among the Germans. I mean the architectural aspect of a literary composition, of a story or a novel—its construction and execution and climactic development. I am certain that the early viewing of organic works of art drew my instinctive attention to the nature of the building process and the laws governing construction. I remember that one day, when I was surely not more than eight years old, I stood before the church of St. Lorenz, completely spellbound, staring at its Gothic rose-window, which struck me as something altogether incomprehensible. And perhaps I may also observe that my faith in form, in literary form, my conviction that it represents the acme of art and the essence of creative endeavor, would never have become so deeply a part of me if in my early youth I had not had so much man-made form before my eyes ; though conscious awareness of it reached me only much later in life, much chaos and obscurity having clouded the beginning.

It is far from my mind to speak disparagingly



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of my native Fuerth, which stands near Nuremberg like a smaller sister ; but that city has always been characterized by a peculiar formlessness, a certain aridity and meagreness. Quite early I came to feel that the proximity of the two cities would determine my spiritual destiny : a union of antiquity and recentness, art and industry, romance and manufacturing, design and dissolution, form and deformity. At the age of ten I had already begun to make long expeditions into the surrounding country, and never could rid myself of a feeling of inescapable melancholy. The harshness of the contours, the monotony of the vistas, the complete absence of anything that might appear poetic or charming to the childish heart—all this, as I can see far more clearly today than at the time, brought into my entire attitude toward the world a certain yearning sensation of chilliness, as if in a previous existence I had known scenery of an entirely different sort, a landscape definitely opposite in character.

After I had published the novel *Alexander in*

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*Babylon*, in 1905, I met a man who had traveled much through the Orient and who, after reading the book, told me that I must have spent a considerable length of time in Asia Minor and Persia. I replied that I had never been there. Thereupon he declared that he would never have believed it had I not told him so myself, for the scenic descriptions in the book were such that he would never have thought it possible for any one to write them without having been in the country at least once. Later I often pondered about his words and about the entire phenomenon involved. Just as, in the realm of art, I believe in a pre-existent form, an innate form that arises of its own accord as a work is composed—that existed within the product before it was created, so to speak, as a statue may be said to exist within a block of marble—so I believe in a pre-existent landscape deriving from that which I would call the racial memory. Here, it is true, confusing mysteries confront us. It is better not to attempt their rational solution. No doubt

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perennial melancholy that may determine one's whole life. Man's visionary qualities are fed by monotony of the landscape. There is a demonstrable connection between external space and the scope of the soul.

When one looks back from a higher standpoint of life and experience, events lose their fortuitous character and stand revealed in the light of predestined fate. My transplantation into the Austrian life and scene at the age of seventeen—a change temporary at first, then permanent—in the course of the decades led to transformations both constitutional and spiritual-intellectual in nature. In earlier times it was possible to conceive of an author without metropolitan experience; but not today, nor even at the close of the nineteenth century. It was then that the metropolis, the city in the abstract, as it were, began to play its sociological rôle, and no writer who used contemporary life as the basis of his creative work could withdraw from its sphere of influence. French literature had set the ex-

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ample a half century earlier : Paris was not only the political, social and geographic heart of the country and the nation, but a kind of symbol in the literary life as well. The German world and German life fought against such a center. The disadvantage deriving from this was that no true social organism ever came into being. The advantage was greater colorfulness, multiformity and spiritual freedom, which produced something scarcely found among other nations, something which I would call the triumph of the provincial, and to which we owe such great personalities as Gottfried Keller, Möricke or Stifter. For the creative work of the German imagination is founded on an entirely different national relationship, one that gives rise to new alliances, new conflicts and new ardors in the midst of upheaval, deplorable though the latter is from the political point of view.

In a sense Vienna complemented my Nuremberg experience. In another sense, again, it totally obliterated that experience. For here

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the obvious was no more, nor purity of impression. The admixture of Slavic and Southern life and the concomitant political and social unrest soon drew my attention to catastrophic possibilities. I came to Vienna for the first time shortly after the death of the Crown Prince Rudolph. That was more than forty years ago, but I still remember clearly the powerful wave of agitation that swept over the people. At the time I was working in a factory, so that my knowledge of the actual situation was far deeper than that of a casual observer. In those days, without being conscious of it, I grew aware of the meaning of Austrian life as a symbol and as destiny ; I stood, so to speak, at the root of the great European struggle between liberalism and autocracy, between the individual and the power of the state. The fact that in this case the heir to the throne had been the representative of freedom and individuality, a downright rebel, had a tremendous effect upon the popular mind and had a far-reaching disintegrating effect on every

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stratum of the populace. I had the opportunity of observing this over a long period of years. In the shop where I worked there was a young foreman who, though he was an out-and-out revolutionary, spoke of the Crown Prince as of a saint. This union of subversive tendencies and loyalty to a dynasty is thoroughly Austrian, and the enigmatic quality of his character could not but attract me. This man was also the first to take me, passionately fond as I was of excursions, into the mountains. A stirring sight for the man of the plains, radically new, oddly dramatic. In that period I became acquainted with various ways of realizing a landscape: amateurish voluntary experience of it, and knowledge compelled by circumstances and acquired through drudgery. The first I found sterile, because it satisfied only inner desires for luxury; but the other, though painful and hard to bear, made indelible impressions on the soul. A typical example of the latter is my year of military service in Würzburg. There I did not merely gain a superficial ac-

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quaintance with the Lower Franconian landscape, that scene which is the heart of Germany, but I experienced it deeply, through suffering ; for it was military drill and regulations that brought me into it, in all-day marches, nocturnal exercises and manœuvres, heavily loaded, forced to endure a strain which my seventeen-year-old body could never have borne if my will had not ruggedly insisted. Through suffering I came to know the beautiful forests, the tree-covered hills, the river, the peaceful villages, the gloomy Spesart, the ancient cloisters, the historic cities, in every season, in every sort of weather. Scenes thus experienced through suffering remain ineradicable in one's memory and determine one's spiritual course. In one of my least-known books, but the one which I like best, *Aufbruch um den Junker Ernst*, I reproduced these scenes that have always remained alive for me ; whether the portrayal is living for others I cannot, of course, know.

The strict discipline I underwent at the time

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when I absorbed this landscape, my resistance to that discipline, which roused all my rebellious instincts and yet taught me to subdue those instincts and subordinate them to a general concept of order—this discipline may have caused the scenery itself to become a conceptional and necessary part of life. The landscape no longer was merely ornamental, an object for excursions, an adventure for a city-dweller, but a part of my being, the expression of a spiritual state, form-giving. It is, indeed, true that any landscape which somehow becomes part of our destiny generates a definite rhythm within us, an emotional rhythm and a rhythm of thought of which we usually remain entirely unconscious and which hence is all the more decisive. It should be possible to recognize from the cadences of a writer's prose the landscape it covers as a fruit covers its kernel. But that, I am afraid, would lead us into occult regions. I should like, however, to see the faces of our critics and historians of literature if they were obliged to ascertain this



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scenic background without knowing the author's formal denomination. They would be greatly embarrassed, and all the racial theories and attempts at rigid classification would suddenly reach a point of beautiful absurdity. Who, for example, could recognize the hand of a genuine Frenchman in *Peter Schlemihl*, or the tongue of an Italian in the manifestoes of Napoleon? For the secrets of nature are not as patent as the facts given on one's passport or in the bureau of vital statistics. The latter, however, make it easily possible for artifice to interpret a man's birth certificate as evidence of a good character or cause for condemnation.

Beginning with my twentieth year traveling was part of my life, and until I was thirty I was driven to it by necessity and homelessness as well as by an inner unrest. I wandered through all of Southern Germany, spent many nights in wooden huts in the Black Forest, journeyed into Switzerland on foot—not only on shank's mare, but on my bare soles—and often had no roof

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over me except the open sky. When I did settle down it was only seemingly. No place could hold me long ; when I had spent three months in some city I was seized by a sort of thirst for air. Mountains and mountainous regions attracted me more and more. I would wander about for months, as if in search of a suitable landscape. Between my thirtieth and fortieth years I traveled from city to city in Italy ; but not my delight in their beauty, nor the satisfaction of my yearnings could hold me there permanently. After a while I would long for a forest or a meadow, a shady tree or even a heavily clouded sky. The South called me, but I belonged to the North. Until at last I found the place which I made my permanent home, a valley in the Styrian mountains ; and this landscape became my friend as a man may become one's friend, tried and true through the years, put to the test of winter and spring, of earth and atmosphere, of people and trees. For this reason, also, my decision was not impetuous, but the result of gradual experience of

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a beneficial influence. It was not only the isolation and quiet that lured me and eventually held me there, but, to a far greater degree, a supersensual tie, if I may be permitted the term. I noted ever more clearly a constitutional correspondence between the landscape and myself, a correspondence lying in what I have called the rhythm of the landscape and which had a manifestly beneficent effect on my creative work, so that only there all my senses were fully awake, only there everything I saw had the power of conviction ; and with this knowledge I stood before a miraculous fact. Even today I still believe that rocks and minerals exert an influence, and the water and air also. For it is these that determine the external appearance of the scene, the calm surface of the lake, the overlapping tapestry of the hills high up to the dominant glacier, the whole revealing an unparalleled harmonious order, as if the hand of the Creator had worked here with particular love.

I was speaking of rocks and cliffs and moun-

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tains. There must be a law that could throw light on the relationship existing between the apparently dead mass of the earth and its living creatures. Animals, by virtue of their instinct, seem to know more than we of such things. It is a well-known fact that mice abandon a region in huge swarms when an earthquake threatens, and this long before the disturbance. All seafarers know that birds will herald a storm that will break only twenty-four hours later. In our country it is usual for the titmice to leave the mountains for the valleys just before a severe snowstorm. Many mystics hold the view that all creatures are aware of the state of the elements, and that under certain conditions the elements behave like living creatures. I recall the words of Görres, who says that when the fresh-pressed juice begins to ferment, the old wine in its casks and bottles also is disturbed. It has been my own experience that a change takes place in me when I move from limestone mountains to mountains composed of crystalline rocks, though the

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level remain the same ; it is as if the red and white blood corpuscles entered into new combinations, thus giving rise to new moods and new thoughts. The landscape in which a person lives does not merely frame the picture ; it enters into his very being and becomes a part of him. This can, of course, be seen much more clearly among savages than within the range of civilization. That is why rivers, deserts, oases and groves play so important a rôle in the formation of myths, which often represent only the scenic experience of a long succession of generations.

The charge has often been made that landscapes, or nature in the broader sense, receive but little space in my books. The charge is difficult to answer. True it is that I have never laid particular stress on the depicting of landscapes. Scenic descriptions as such, for their own sake, conflict with the congruity and dynamic quality of a narrated event. If we look over the fiction produced during the nineteenth century we constantly meet with long-winded descriptions of re-

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gions and scenes, descriptions that grow less and less vivid as they go into more and more minute detail. An art that sets itself the goal of portraying men and human lives cannot pause for ecstatic rhapsodies, just as serious travelers do not stop to admire a group of trees ; their course is determined by continuous, unswerving progress. They fulfill their purpose only in so far as they adhere to the set rhythm. I have always endeavored to inject scenic elements into my figures, that these elements might emerge from them as characteristic traits, as signs that they belong to their environment. Any duplication disturbs the imagination. After I had simply given up the direct portrayal of landscapes it developed that my writing embraced much more of the scenic than before.

But I do not apply the term inner landscape to this alone. The significance of the concept is much broader. To me it means not merely the landscape that lies in a character as an innate element of it but, to a far higher degree,

the inner condition of my own soul, which is the generator of the landscape corresponding to the figure and which, indeed, produces the figure itself and the entire complex of characters. This is a little difficult to understand. I shall try to make it clear.

All creative work derives only partially from the world of reality, from actual experience and observation; for the rest, and probably the more essential part, it consists of dreams and visions. Even if we accept naturalistic descriptions—as those of Zola, or Tolstoi's incomparably genuine portrayal of a hunt or a race, or Gerhart Hauptmann's picture of the life of the weavers—as a literal transcription of reality done without art or effort we are grossly deceived; and this very deception constitutes its author's purpose and triumph. For all art rests upon an apparent homogeneity and identity with life; but as a matter of fact it differs from real life approximately as a pyramid differs from the kiln in which its constituent bricks were manufactured.

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The dreams and visions within me are the product of not only my own experience but also of the experience of my ancestors, racial experience that, effaceable from individual memory only, survives eternally through successive generations. Perhaps this is the source of that well-known feeling of having already experienced a certain event or situation ; though here too we must beware of rationalistic speculation. For these things are far more mysterious and obscure than we can imagine. In the final analysis all the moral precepts, religious impulses and spiritual tendencies of an individual proceed out of deeply rooted racial memories. So that it is only seemingly that my work is determined by my personal volition. The scene in which I have my unconscious being is thousands of years old. A soft stroke of the bell of fancy, a cue from the land of dreams will suffice to take me where I have never been before, to make me follow roads I have never known. Innumerable layers and strata reaching down to the very beginnings of



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time constitute this inner landscape, which not only moulds the soul but gives the human countenance its uniqueness of features. Accordingly we have types of faces that suggest rocks or stones, rivers, forests or the sea. Out of the vast ebullient mass of material at its disposal, nature, unlimited as to time, invariably creates only the unique. It seems that this is coming to be realized more and more clearly and vitally ; hence the fundamental problem of modern man is the problem of time and the problem of uniqueness.

Thus my inner landscape is the organically basal element in me, that which by its very nature is immortal. My mind and my will aim for intrinsic uniqueness and are aware of nothing else. My soul, on the other hand, seeks universality of form in what has been and, consequently, in what is to be. These are axioms which in one respect border on the religious field, and in another receive the confirmation of science. One of the most noteworthy and fertile of biological discoveries tells us that changes in the substance

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of the brain cause no change in one's sense of individuality, but that modifications in the constitution of the blood or in the circulation do have such an effect. Personality is engendered at the point where the inner and outer landscapes are contiguous, where the mythical and the permanent flow into limited time. And every literary work, every deed, every achievement is the result of an amalgamation of the tangible and the intangible, of the inner vision and the actual picture, of the idea and the factual situation, of conception and form. The outer landscape of the world no longer needs to be discovered, though its influence and effect on the soul are not yet fully known. But the inner landscape of man largely remains *terra incognita*, and when it comes to illuminating this unknown region our so-called psychology is but a pale little lamp.

An author does not need to give special proof of the determination of his mental and spiritual development by the elements and by the earth from which he has sprung. His work provides

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and contains that demonstration. In my own case, however, the factors that I have already expounded are complicated by the fact that I am a Jew. Behind my intimate relationship to the landscape, therefore—or so, at least, I have heard ever since I can remember ; so those who, as it were, place no credence in the air I breathe try to make me believe—lies a background said to contradict all that is manifest, all my natural experience and my spiritual ties. At first glance it does not appear very easy to detect a connection between the landscape governing a man of letters, be it outer or inner, and his racial descent, his religious denomination or even merely that which is called creed—a concept which at this time no longer has true reality. But the differentiation here involved is not of my making ; I have been forced into it by circumstances. Objectively viewed, from the standpoint of my life as such, as a human being, as a feeble instrument used, among others, by the divine force for the interpretation of its mysteries, as a fashioner

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of forms and symbols who has been endowed with words that will make known to all the essence and the heart of him, I should never have had to make such a decision ; but the opposing movement compels me to make it, compels me by casting doubt on all I have achieved and effected and by forcing me into a defensive position that is contrary to nature, to intelligence, to art and to truth. I confess frankly, however, that I do not wish this. I boldly declare that it would not be compatible with the dignity I ascribe to myself. If an artist should be required to vindicate his work, which was born in him out of the most unfathomable impulse known to creation, out of the immutable essence of his being, out of the mandatory formula by which he stands, then life becomes an absurdity for him and he commits self-denial and self-betrayal. I refuse to deny myself, I refuse to betray myself. Those who dispute my essential identification with the country of my birth, who take the blood in my veins as a pretext for relegating me to an inferior cate-

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gory of humankind—blood ! as if blood could serve as an index of excellence or baseness, as if blood could be appraised and weighed like gold, as if all of us were not condemned to live with the same blood in the same world of woe—they also refuse to believe the landscape out of which I have sprung and in which I work, and for the legitimacy of which I have no proof except myself and my living awareness of it. If what I have produced is truly alive it needs no attestation ; if not, no argumentative skill or defensive action can make it so. Nor do I know of any arbiter to uphold me except my inner voice and the voices of those who tell me that I exist for them, for the community and for the world. This you must take as a confession of faith. For fundamentally, from my earliest beginnings, I am bound up with what I fashion and with the heritage of history—racial history, scenic history, spiritual history—that with fateful inevitability is interwoven with my being and that shapes my life from stage to stage. And I

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feel that this is more than a spiritual confession of faith : it is religious, if indeed religion is meek submission to an unknown higher power that we declare to be holy because it stands above and beyond our earthly standards and relationships. In this sense, and only thus, am I a Jew, am I a German, am I a human being.

I have attempted here to elucidate, with the aid of the landscapes I have known, my intellectual and spiritual origins, my inner relationship to my work and my age and, in a certain sense, the road I have followed. Perhaps this is too discreet a means of explanation and self-interpretation. Perhaps I am expected to do what today is called taking a stand, a militant attitude toward our time and the events now taking place. Some believe that I am too half-hearted or too restrained in my defense against the theories and political plots that menace all art, all intellect, all culture and, ultimately, myself, my life and my work. Perhaps, indeed, they even feel that one's own person is not so important or so cen-

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tral or so interesting as to warrant the citing of it and its achievements and aspirations in the battle against the darkness and savagery of a new medievalism, against the madness and hate and racial conceit that threaten to shroud us, our children, and children's children, in darkness.

These objections may be justified. But it must be considered that a man of letters who has devoted his entire life, almost forty years of work, to the transfiguration of men through the medium of imagery and form—not didactically or with the intention of instructing therefor, but through the visual and the imagination and the heart—must find it difficult, more difficult than it is for others, to restate expressly that which he has already portrayed and formed. It is simply impossible. Did we not live in so shattered, so incoherent, so horribly forgetful a world such a question would never arise and I would not need to point to the fictitious but none the less living characters that testify for me (and must testify for me, if all my life has not been

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a farce). I could refer to unequivocal manifestoes, to desperate and tireless direct efforts to ward off the demon of politics and all its disastrous appurtenances, to prevent the suicide which Europe is committing. I foresaw it and issued a warning twenty-five years ago. In the book on the literati I sounded the first danger-signal. Twelve years ago, in the speech on humanity, I tried to throw myself upon the mercies of the raging furies. In my address to the youth on the life of the spirit I endeavored to bring my young friends in Germany to their senses ; finally, in my self-contemplations, I indicated—with deep sorrow, with sincere and solemn entreaty, with the most incontrovertible arguments—the fatally catastrophic consequences of national and racial arrogance. Thirty-six years ago, in my first book, *Die Juden von Zirndorf*, I opened my visor and, so to speak, laid my cards on the table ; this at a time when it had not yet occurred to any Jewish author in Germany to publish the state of his soul, to reveal his roots and disclose the asso-



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ciations engendered by his blood. Is all this nothing? It would appear so, if I understand correctly an indictment I have read in a Zionist journal and wherein I am said to have touched only lightly, with a few indifferent phrases, on the nature of the conflict that marks me and my sort. These gentlemen please to forget. They have forgotten, especially, that opposition and fleeting tendencies are not the only way of helping humanity, that there are other methods. They have forgotten that beyond the day stands the century and beyond the century eternity. Not that I presume to claim immortality; but in every man who is sincere, sincere before God, truth operates beyond physical and temporal limitations. May I remind the forgetful ones that in *Etzel Andergast* there is a song of the Jew which I wrote in my hour of blackest torment? I shall plead my case only by quoting it; it runs as follows:

I come from the world's first day and go on until  
time's at an end.

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In the beginning, they say, was the word ; and  
what does that portend ?

Blood and woe, scars and tears,  
Trembling, begging, want and fears,  
Flight and quaking, roving, pain,  
From the Tigris West to Spain.

Who sings this pretty little song ? Say, who ?  
The nice little Jew, pert little Jew !  
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Co.,  
Red rose of Jericho.

In Worms and Vienna, Rome and Madrid I knew  
the flail and dirk.

War, famine and pestilence, all were my handi  
work ;

So emperor, pope and czar all stated,  
So their councils asseverated.

Dogs and men, soldier and priest and knight  
Through the bars of my prison-cell would spi  
their spite.

Tenfold payment always, a hundred deaths to  
die, a thousand penalties,  
And then to kiss the hangman's feet as I crouched  
there on my knees.

Who sings this pretty little song ? Say, who ?  
The nice little Jew, pert little Jew !  
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Co.,  
Bleeding rose of Jericho.

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King David was my ancestor—it really slipped  
my mind—

Blood royal through and through, and yet, on  
how much filth I've dined !

But I pretend to low degree,

For that is the divine decree.

Be of good cheer—two thousand years : a drop  
in time's unmeasured sea,

And so much patience still is mine, enough for  
all eternity.

Rise proudly, son of Zion, as you may,

Your persecutors are of baser clay.

Who sings this pretty little song ? Say, who ?

The nice little Jew, pert little Jew !

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Co.,

Holy rose of Jericho.

And now, all this notwithstanding, I would again employ that most indirect method—which for me is the only one that has dignity and meaning—to show what I mean by transformation, to give a picture of that higher realm where souls attain their divinely fixed purpose, where dream and vision hold sway and where imagination makes us subject to a law, mute adherence

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to which alone can lead to a purification of life.

Indubitably the work of every outstanding author can be viewed as centering about one dominant idea. In my case, I believe, this dominant idea is that of justice. Of course one cannot know to what extent conscious cognizance of events and demonstrable experience or inherent tendencies have determined this attitude toward life and this spiritual aspiration.

To begin with one must have a clear definition of justice. Evidently it represents a balanced state of soul, guilt being placed on one scale and expiation on the other ; or the crime on one and the punishment on the other ; or suffering on one side and on the other relief of suffering. Besides, the suffering or the guilt may be mine or my fellow man's, so that my interest in the amending of it may be direct or indirect ; that would determine my view of the nature of the case, my judgment of it and the pain caused by absence of adjustment, to which one can never become reconciled. In any case the question is

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one of the yardstick used, and connected with the inner constitution of the individual, his feeling for the world and for God, his confidence in the immanent order of things. The matter of light is involved here, I may say ; our life is blessed with light or condemned to darkness according to the conviction we reach—empirically, from personal or extra-personal experience—concerning that spiritual quality which we call justice. From this no human being can disengage himself. The standard of justice employed in any community, be it the state or the family or humanity as a whole, determines the sum total of the joy, inspiration, willingness, service and comfort, of all the happiness, in short, which that community is capable of producing.

None can deny that justice—not merely as an abstract idea, as the incarnation of deity, but as a moral command of supremely violent urgency—constitutes the moral and legislative, political and religious fundament of Judaism. Can sixty generations delete this mark so deeply

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branded in the heart and soul of a people? I think not. And is it not logical to suppose that such a command, uttered in hoary antiquity—such an idea, operating in the dawn of history—grew out of a long memory of suffering, a tortured path of suffering? More than the result of past suffering, it represented a spiritual bulwark against pre-sensed future agonies beyond which stood he who would deliver them from all wrong, the great equalizer who would bring them compensation: the Messiah.

Let us survey the last twenty centuries of Jewish history. Or we could consider only ten, the last ten; that would be enough. It is a road of sorrow and tears unparalleled since human deeds and sufferings have been recorded. People forget this, erase it from their minds. How else could they continue to live? The individual wants no share in the misdeeds of his contemporaries, nor posterity in those of its ancestors. Whether a hundred or a thousand or thrice a hundred thousand men perished at the

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stake or at the hands of murderers instead of dying of old age in their beds may, possibly, make no difference five centuries later, or even twenty years later. Some derive comfort from the consideration that mankind is beyond all cure and help. Yet every occurrence is preserved in the group and tribal memory and constitutes the experiential nucleus of history and mythology.

To this constant confrontation with the past the Jews were more exposed than any other nation, for their entire spiritual life has always had its sphere in the region between law and legend. Now let us visualize these centuries of accumulated criminal fury, ruthless massacre, spiritual and bodily ravishment, malicious slander, systematic blood-baiting mitigated by no scruples whatsoever, fanatical persecution to the point of utter exhaustion of the victims, orgies of greed and cruelty under the cloak of religion and with the ulterior motive of removal of business competition : truly, only a dullard can live on without realizing that this Christian Europe repre-

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sents a shambles dripping with human blood. Of expiation and reparation, however, there is not and never was any sign ; the miserable alms granted in a brief period of humanization are too insignificant for consideration. The fathomless hatred has never ceased to smoulder ; the Jew drew a deep breath whenever it did not actually scorch him. The means of persecution have become more refined. The charges no longer cite well-poisoning and the crucifixion of the Savior but go much farther : they undermine life itself, human and civil rights as such, and, when they carry the matter to its logical conclusion, extend the anathema to the person of the Savior himself. A sycophantic science serves to perpetuate the lies which even without it were ineradicable. They are brought forward in the exultation of military victory ; they are brought forward when a war is lost. For some one must bear the guilt, and who can bear it better than the Jew ?

The transgressions of individuals are interpreted as indicating the degeneration of the



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group : their anarchistic stand, which goes back to their exclusion from the law ; their consanguinity and solidarity, which go back to the social barbed wire that bars them off ; their preponderant commercial and mercantile interests, which go back to the centuries of prohibitions and special measures that permitted them to act only as money-lenders and as the bankers of princes ; their intellectualism, which is the fruit of a thousand-year-old pressure, of their total spiritual isolation among the nations, their sole salvation having lain in meditating upon the meaninglessness of life while facing death ; their conspicuousness, their industry and shrewdness and that radicalism, translated into action by their ancient fear and desperation, which runs the gamut from petty impudence and insubordination to the destruction of the existing order ; their alleged physical cowardice, which, where it is not actual fear and trembling branded into their hearts by the experience of centuries, represents nothing more nor less than a libelous ex-

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pression of the fact that the Jew shuns violence ; and, finally, their inability to become assimilated in a larger community—as if an opportunity for this had ever been offered them sincerely, without intent to humiliate and without ignominious stipulations. (Even in Napoleon's negotiations with the French Sanhedrin the reluctant Emancipation Edict was motivated only by greed for power and ill-concealed self-interest.) No exception is admitted here. With every other people on the globe a few noble and outstanding individuals are taken as indicative of the merit and culture of the group ; only in the case of the Jews are all judged by the basest. This would not let me rest even if I were no Jew ; I am sure I would not be able to rid myself of the sting, the reproach, the call of conscience, the feeling of a festering wound in the body of the nation. But fate has made me a Jew—that is, a man who will dedicate all his powers, his blood and his soul, his life and his future life, to the reaching of a state of balance ; so that it is

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not surprising that the idea of justice hangs over me like an empyreal flame.

One may not insist on one's own exception from the rule. To do so would rouse the opposition of the "mothers"; and declaration of membership in a community for which one is held accountable is a point of honor as long as no reparation has been made for the wrong done that group. Some men hold their own against the world by their spiritual power, others by their character, that is to say, by the wholeness of their being. The spirit as defined and understood in the nineteenth century has today been deposed from its throne. Now it can assert itself only as an agent for the development of individual character, with the tacit assumption that the individual is a link in the chain, a responsible and sustaining part of a whole.

Not that hearts are not stirred occasionally, or grown contrite and capable of transfiguration. But the course of the world is not changed at all, nor the hatred, the falsehood, the misunder-

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standing, the madness and the injustice. When, twelve years ago, I published *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*, wherein I indicated—all too feebly, as I gladly avow—the deleterious effects of this universal historic disgrace on my own life, I received letters from every class of German society : women and girls, ex-officers and teachers, professors and public officials wrote that they had had no idea of all these things, that I had opened their eyes ; and they gave their pledge—some, indeed, very solemnly—that in the future they would do their utmost to change the situation. Those were empty words. Everything has grown much worse.

In New York, very often, when I walked through the streets of the Bronx, I saw such glaring masses of Jewish misery that the sight was hard to bear. This immense ghetto has a population of close to half a million, of whom about a thousand become well-to-do each year and perhaps a hundred achieve wealth ; this minority provides the tinder for the furnace of

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anti-Semitism, where the millions are then consumed without further reason. The fire consumes them, whatever happens. If not actually, then in effigy, which in the eyes of God does not improve matters in the least. At the time of the First Crusade a single monk succeeded in bringing about the massacring or suicide of sixteen thousand Jews in the Rhenish provinces. Why can a single individual do so much evil, while one man alone can accomplish almost no good? This is true in great things and in small alike; it destroys our courage. Evil is much more active by nature: this may be the reason; indeed, the most of what we call action stands on the border-line between good and evil. Perhaps that explains why the wisdom of Buddha is so profound and the Buddhist ideal the furthest removed from action.

But I am not a Hindu; I am a European, full to the brim with European destiny, moulded by the European spirit. What race and blood make of us is unfathomable, but the inner influence

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of climate, landscape, language and environment is demonstrable and tangible. Some one might tell me to extricate myself from the vicious circle and to stand alone in the future, to declare myself an exception and thus to become exceptional ; then I might be able to free many others from the same compulsion to conflict—for often only the formula is needed for a definite shaping of one's life, the necessary forces being there. . . This is easily said ; but to do it constitutes one of the most difficult of all tasks. What, in the final analysis, does the European spirit mean to the men of Europe ? A fiction grown untenable. Today one can hardly venture to think as a European ; to write as a European is considered almost treason. Europe has given herself up. How can she sustain us ?

Not very long ago there was a moment when I felt I would be able to shake off that mysterious attachment which sometimes is more heedful of appeals from without than of the inner voice. Something in me resists any attempt to pin me

down, to judge my work by the views it expresses ; especially if the critics are my fellows, who frequently demean themselves in much more orthodox fashion than the enemy. I thought I would rise above all this into a realm I had conquered for my own, and for an instant reveled in the dream that I would thus set an example and a precedent, as would be natural in a rational and decent world. It proved impossible. Injustice welds one to those who suffer wrong, and the hatred that darkens the world makes an inner obligation of the external appeal. On one occasion I wrote : "I feel that there is something like justice, perhaps as a binding force in the crystalline absolute, but never in human deeds which themselves become motive impulses. That crystalline element stands high above us ; words can only grope for it awkwardly ; if you would grasp it it becomes error and falsehood ; and if you would express it you must grow as still as a lake of the plains that mirrors the heavens."

Does not this say everything ?







